

BARRIERS AND PROMISING APPROACHES TO

WORKFORCE AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

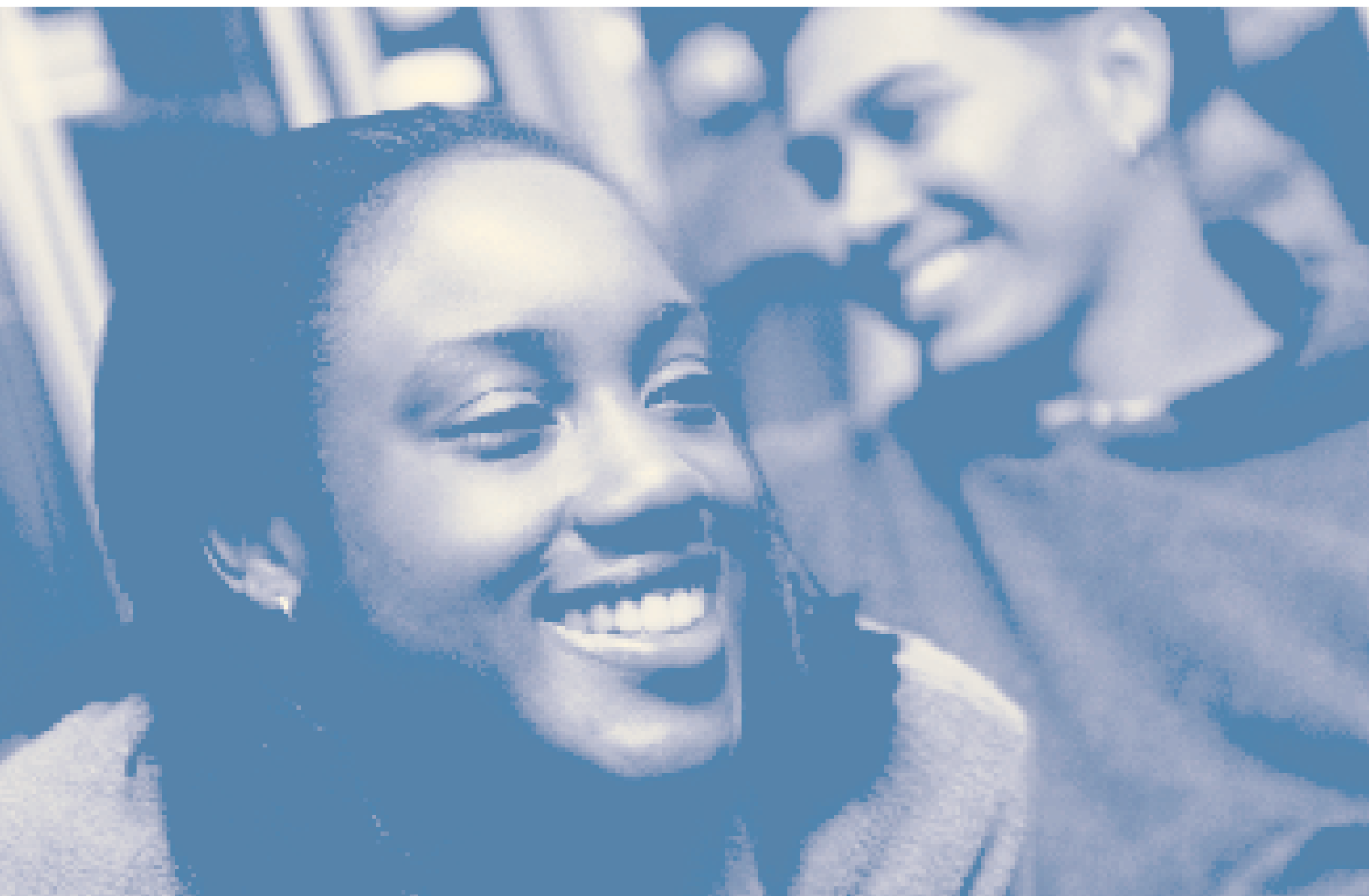
for YOUNG OFFENDERS

toolkit

Report to the Annie E. Casey
Foundation by the National
Youth Employment Coalition,
the Justice Policy Institute,
and the Youth Development
and Research Fund

Barriers and Promising
Approaches to
Workforce and Youth
Development for
Young Offenders

OVERVIEW



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introduction

With juvenile crime and justice receiving sustained attention and study, employment and training programs for court-involved young people have been examined as providing solutions to some of the challenges facing the nation's juvenile justice system. In 1997, the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) of the U.S. Department of Justice sponsored a task force to study ways of meeting the employment and training needs of young people who had been in trouble with the law. The task force was convened by the Home Builders Institute, which was searching for ways to enhance vocational preparation, reduce youth crime and recidivism, and improve the prospects for court-involved youth in the labor market.¹

In 1999, the Annie E. Casey Foundation asked the National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC), in cooperation with the Youth Development and Research Fund (YDRF) and the Justice Policy Institute (JPI), to build on the task force's work. The Foundation wanted to identify what works: exemplary programs and policy initiatives that help court-involved youth become economically self-sufficient.

The question of whether employment and training programs are the solution to the problems that confront the juvenile justice system is a legitimate one. For a good portion of the past two decades youth crime and juvenile justice have been subjected to sustained attention and study. The issues matter to policymakers, juvenile justice workers, politicians, and parents, and they matter to the young people themselves.

1

Identify barriers to juvenile justice system reform; review the literature on youth employment, workforce development, juvenile justice.

2

Survey, synthesize information on innovative state and local policy initiatives.

3

Examine exemplary employment and development programs for court-involved youth.

THREE OBJECTIVES

what's in the toolkit?

OVERVIEW: Outlines problems and identifies solutions

PROGRAM PROFILES: Programs that display promising practices

POLICY PROFILES: Creative use of the public sector

There has always been tension in the juvenile justice system between the dual goals of punishment and rehabilitation. And in recent years, the pendulum has swung so markedly toward punishment that the system's ability to rehabilitate has been hampered. Much of the juvenile justice system's punitive approach undermines youth development.

overview

Conventional wisdom says all adolescents need positive developmental opportunities that exercise their intellectual, psychological, social, moral, and ethical capacities. Young people benefit from experiential learning. They need to belong to groups even as they protect their individuality. Adolescents want and need adult support and interest. They need to express opinions, challenge adult assumptions, and learn to make appropriate choices and use new skills.

The alternative is what makes the nightly news: Young people who don't have positive outlets stray down dangerous paths. Gang membership, for example, meets the needs for safety and group identification, offers responsibility, and gives opportunities to practice decision-making skills and collaborative work. It also disposes adolescents to involvement in crime and violence.

Our rapidly changing society and decreasing sense of community have blocked many pathways to the experience and support young people need to move toward productive citizenship. The pervasiveness of violence and hopelessness in many communities threatens their welfare and blocks developmental opportunities. Societal commitment to create

programs and services to meet young people's developmental needs is critical.

What do we know about employment programs for young offenders? A look at the history of the juvenile justice system and at some statistical information can provide perspective.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

- Employment and career-focused programs that promote self-sufficiency are comprehensive, sustained, grounded in the principles of youth development, and connected to further education or long-term career opportunities.
- Preparing for workforce success requires more than vocational training and job readiness classes.
- The barriers are significant: insufficient funding for alternative strategies, taxpayer resistance, punishment instead of empowerment, overwhelmed and dysfunctional courts, lack of interagency collaboration.

WHAT DOES YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MEAN?

- Focus on the positive results adolescents seek and can achieve—not the negative results adults hope to prevent
- Change the subject of the dialogue from youth with problems to youth as resources
- Engage the community in supporting young people as they grow into productive citizenship



WHO NEEDS THIS TOOLKIT?

- Juvenile justice practitioners: judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, probation staff, juvenile detention and corrections facility administrators, community-based program operators
- Workforce development practitioners
- Youth development practitioners
- Youth advocates
- State, local, and community policymakers



HISTORY AND A FEW STATISTICS

From its inception, the juvenile justice system has struggled to find a happy medium between the desire to protect and rehabilitate young offenders and the mandate to punish criminals.² Early system reformers worked to separate juvenile from adult offenders and to understand juveniles as qualitatively different from adults and therefore as more malleable and deserving of rehabilitation. But examining the history of the first juvenile court, established in Chicago in 1899, reveals its use as the preferred alternative to the adult courts, where some believed juveniles would be treated too leniently.

After the turn of the century, the juvenile court concept spread across the nation, and by 1925, all but two states had created new systems. By the 1950s and 1960s, the tension between the rehabilitative aspects of juvenile justice and due process protections for young people accused of crimes had come into sharp focus. Public confidence in the effectiveness of rehabilitation declined, and concerns over procedural safeguards were heightened.

Between the late 1970s and early 1980s, a change began that came to full flower in the 1990s. States began to statutorily exclude entire categories of youth from juvenile

A SHORT STORY

In 1964, Jerry Gault, a 15-year-old Arizona boy, was given an indeterminate, 6-year sentence for making a crank call. The maximum adult sentence for the same offense was 60 days. When the Supreme Court heard the case, it ruled that juveniles were to be extended basic constitutional protections: the right to notice and counsel, the right to cross-examination of witnesses, and the right to protection against self-incrimination. This began a shift throughout juvenile justice, and juvenile adjudication began to follow the adult model.

court (beginning with New York in the 1970s)³ or to give prosecutors discretion over where young offenders would be tried (beginning with Florida in the early 1980s).⁴ There was a co-incident explosion in adult prison populations, and some of the more punitive aspects spilled over to juvenile justice. In the 1970s, California, often considered a bellwether state for public policy, removed “rehabilitation” as a goal of its adult correctional system and added “punishment” as a juvenile justice goal. Across the country, a mixture of punishment and treatment supplanted the emphasis on rehabilitation and prevention.

With the burgeoning juvenile justice system and concomitant growth of professionals entering the field, there has been an effort to relieve the tension by adopting “restorative justice.” The juvenile codes of 17 states now include provisions incorporating offender accountability, public safety, victim restitution, and competency development.

The crack cocaine epidemic of the 1990s led to a spike in juvenile crime—especially homicides—that was met with a nationwide crackdown on youthful offenders. Between 1992 and 1997, 47 states and the District of Columbia passed laws to make juvenile justice more punitive: In 44 states and in the District of Columbia it became simpler to transfer juveniles to adult court systems, and by the

end of the 1997 legislative sessions, 47 states had revoked traditional confidentiality protections.⁵

The National Center for Juvenile Justice estimated that, in 1996, more than 200,000 people under the age of 18 were prosecuted in adult courts; another 983,100 were formally processed in juvenile court that year.⁶ According to the Justice Department, in 1997, 7100 young people were housed in adult prisons, nearly double the number in 1984.⁷ A one-day count in 1997 revealed 9100 juveniles held in adult jails; a similar day in 1985 had 1630.⁸ Another 106,000 juveniles were held in residential placement facilities in 1997—71 percent of them in locked facilities.⁹ Data like these led Amnesty International to name specific human rights violations in the American juvenile justice system.¹⁰

Although the transfer of large numbers of juveniles into the adult system is a growing problem, the deterioration of the juvenile justice system itself is of equal, if less well publicized, concern. In *No Matter How Loud I Shout*, journalist Ed Humes wrote, “In Los Angeles, the judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys can’t remember individual kids anymore, or faces or histories. They look at you as if you’re insane if you name a juvenile and ask what happened to his or her case . . . the kids have been reduced to categories.”¹¹

The juvenile court system, wrote William Ayers in *A Kind and Just Parent*, “has become by all accounts an unfit parent . . . unable to see children as three-dimensional beings or to solve the problems they bring with them through the doors, incapable of addressing the complicated needs of families. The gap between the crises faced by families and youths in trouble and the capacity of the juvenile court to address them is vast and growing.”¹²

Overwhelmed Courts

It takes just 12 minutes to finish a case in Chicago’s juvenile courts; in Los Angeles, it’s just 4 or 5 minutes.

WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS?

Less Hype, More Help: Reducing Juvenile Crime, What Works—And What Doesn’t,¹³ lists juvenile justice woes:

- Overwhelmed courts
- Glaring imbalances between institutional and community-based resources
- Underinvestment in community programs
- Counterproductive “net widening”

According to Krisberg and Austin, despite rhetoric “steeped in concern such as ‘compassionate care’ and ‘individualized treatment’ . . . too often the reality is assembly-line justice in which large numbers of youngsters and their families are quickly ‘disposed of’ through a limited number of options that rarely are adequately funded.”¹⁴

Glaring Imbalance

There is no parity in funding for institutional versus community-based services. The United States spends \$10 billion a year on juvenile justice, most of it on institutional confinement—the most expensive and least effective adjudication method—often in training schools. In 1997, only 21 percent of youthful offenders in out-of-home placements were guilty of violent offenses, but 70 percent of those in custody were held in locked facilities.¹⁵

Between 50 and 70 percent of the young people released from those facilities are rearrested within 2 years, and there is an inverse relationship between the severity of the sanction for a first crime and the time elapsed until the second arrest. There is similar overuse in preadjudication detention: Despite sharp national declines in youth crime, populations rose by more than 20 percent between 1993 and 1997.¹⁶ Missouri and Massachusetts stand out from the rest of the nation, closing all their large training schools for young offenders. Within a year of release, just

REHABILITATION OR RECIDIVISM?

There has been little research on the programs and policies that will be needed to support the transition of the large numbers of young people churning through the adult prison system. Over the next 20 years, a huge number of ex-offenders will be released from prison after spending much of their adult lives—starting in adolescence—incarcerated. Setting aside the philosophical debates about treating adolescents as adults, there are likely to be profound and unforeseen consequences.

According to Columbia University researcher Jeffrey Fagan, young people who are housed with adults report they are five times as likely to be sexually assaulted, twice as likely to be assaulted by staff, and twice as likely to be assaulted with a weapon as are those who are housed in juvenile facilities.

A study by Donna Bishop and Charles Frazier evaluated the recidivism rates of matched sets of young offenders tried in adult courts and those tried in juvenile courts. Young people who were tried in the adult system were rearrested more frequently, more quickly, and for more serious offenses than were those who were retained in the juvenile justice system.

The same authors interviewed 50 young offenders who had been sent to prison and 50 sent to state “maximum risk” juvenile institutions. They reported that the young people saw a difference: The rehabilitative strengths of the juvenile justice system were absent from the adult prison system. More than half of those in the juvenile facilities expected not to offend again, 30 percent were uncertain whether they would commit another crime, and just 3 percent said they were likely to offend again. Ninety percent attributed their rehabilitation to good juvenile justice programming and services. Only one young offender in juvenile detention reported learning new ways to commit crime. Most respondents reported at least one favorable contact with a staff person.

By contrast, 40 percent of the young people held in adult facilities said they were learning new criminal methods. Most reported that the guards and staff in prisons were indifferent or hostile. Only one-third of the group in the adult facility said they expected not to offend again.

11.2 percent of Missouri's juvenile offenders were returned to its Department of Youth Services.¹⁷

The overuse of locked facilities contributes to subsequent delinquency, and it worsens conditions within overwhelmed juvenile facilities. According to OJJDP, nearly 70 percent of incarcerated young people are in overcrowded facilities.¹⁸ Fewer than 50 percent of juveniles in detention centers—and just 16 percent of those in long-term institutions—are in facilities that meet all six basic health service criteria set by OJJDP.

Underinvestment

The corollary to the overuse of institutions is the second-class status of community-based alternatives to locked confinement. Although 11 percent of young people referred to juvenile court end up in residential placement, those placements disproportionately deplete juvenile justice budgets. This phenomenon results not from an overuse but from overreliance on group care and other costly and often ineffective residential options. The American Youth Policy Forum notes that the choices faced by the juvenile courts are stark—costly and debilitating institutional care versus underfunded and overloaded probation.¹⁹ This is particularly striking, given the tremendous success of nonresidential programming,

including multisystemic family therapy, functional family therapy, and advocacy and case management.

Net Widening

Juvenile crime rates have dropped since 1994, but juvenile arrests and processing through juvenile courts have continued to increase sharply. Index, or serious, crime rates for young offenders dropped by 18 percent from 1994 to 1998, but there was a 1 percent increase in the overall juvenile arrest rate, and a larger proportion of young offenders were referred as a matter of policy to juvenile court for formal processing.²⁰ In 1998, there were more juvenile arrests for curfew violations and for running away from home than for all violent index offenses combined. The increase in curfew arrests between 1994 and 1998 by itself accounts for the entire increase in juvenile arrests during that period.²¹

Labeling theories in sociology have long said that housing nondelinquent young people with juvenile delinquents courts disaster. Lower risk offenders subjected to intensive supervision tend to do worse, not better. And longitudinal studies show that most young people who come into contact with the juvenile justice system once never do so again (status offenders are even less likely to commit a second crime).²² Only about 8 percent of those who have one contact have more than 3 additional contacts. It

seems wasteful to devote resources to adjudicating these young people, because so many of them would cease offending in any case.

The good news is that Americans haven't given up hope. Focus group sessions by Building Blocks for Youth²³

HOW CAN CASELOADS RISE AS CRIME RATES FALL?

The limited resources of the system are increasingly being stretched to cover misdemeanor and status offenders. Status offenses are acts that would not be crimes if committed by adults: truancy, running away from home, curfew violations. As serious crime rates have dropped, police have "formalized" more nonserious offenses, widening the net of social control. From 1994 to 1998, felony index offenses dropped by 18 percent but arrest rates rose:

- Simple assault: 10 percent
- Disorderly conduct: 20 percent
- Drug violations (mostly possession): 26 percent
- Curfew violations: 49 percent

and polling data collected by the California Wellness Foundation,²⁴ for example, show the public is unwilling to give up on young people. The rehabilitative ethic is alive in the hearts of Americans, although there is a general lack of confidence in the courts' ability to hold young people accountable for their behavior and turn their own lives around. Thus, the public also has shown a reluctant willingness to support adult court waivers so that at least "something is done" with youthful offenders.

So the juvenile justice system is caught in a bind: The more poorly it functions, the more the adult system will siphon off offenders and the resources needed for adjudication, and the more starved the juvenile system is for resources and public confidence, the more poorly it will function.

The challenge for youth development and juvenile justice efforts is to create programs that have a measurable effect, to collect and quantify the results of those programs, and to educate the public on how well those efforts work.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

The notion of work as a way to prevent delinquency and reform juvenile offenders is close to universal.²⁵ People believe that if young people have a little money in their

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT

In 1998, Congress passed P.L. 105-220, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), to promote a new approach to youth employment and training. The act combined the old Summer Youth Employment and Training Program with the Job Training Partnership Act's year-round program, replaced Private Industry Councils with Workforce Investment Boards, and prompted stronger links between the workforce development and juvenile justice systems. About a third of WIA funds must go to programs for out-of-school youth, requiring a shift of resources from stand-alone summer jobs programs to year-round programming. Full state implementation was required by July 1, 2000.

The act has given states and communities an incentive to combine traditional youth employment and training services, and Congress set program elements that mirror the core principles of youth development: mentoring, community service, leadership development, peer-centered activities, and long-term follow-up and supports.

Each local Workforce Investment Board establishes a youth council, which must include juvenile justice system or law enforcement representation, to advise on the selection and oversight of grant-receiving youth programs. The council develops the youth-serving portions of the local plan, names providers to receive grants from the local board, conducts provider oversight, and coordinates local youth activities. The councils facilitate the collaborative initiatives and foster the creative use of WIA and local resources.

The state Workforce Investment Boards must include “representatives of individuals and organizations that have experience with respect to youth activities.” Many states are moving to establish state youth councils, which also should include representatives of the juvenile justice system.

WIA services are available to disadvantaged young people between the ages of 14 and 21. An additional requirement is that participants must face at least one of a half-dozen specific barriers to employment, one of which is court involvement.

Youth development principals are reflected in the WIA youth program requirements:

- Tutoring, study skills training, dropout prevention, alternative secondary school services, activities that promote positive social behavior outside of school hours
- Occupational skills training, summer employment opportunities linked to academic and occupational learning, paid and unpaid work, internships, job shadowing
- Leadership development, community service, peer-centered activities
- Supportive services; adult mentoring for at least a year; follow-up services for at least a year; comprehensive guidance, counseling, and drug and alcohol abuse counseling referrals

The act also established the Youth Opportunity (YO) grants initiative to direct resources to empowerment zones, enterprise communities, and other high-poverty areas and to increase employment and school completion rates of all young people. The YO program started with 36 communities' receiving grants of up to \$11 million annually. The money funds comprehensive services in high-poverty areas for up to 5 years. Their projects could therefore work to collaborate with local juvenile justice agencies to ensure that juvenile offenders are included.

More information about the act, including a plain-text version in various formats, is available online: www.usworkforce.org.

pockets and are productively occupied, they will be less likely to break the law and more likely to become productive adult citizens.

The research in employment and training programs paints a more complex picture. There is strong evidence of a connection among poverty, unemployment, and delinquency.²⁶ Yet it cannot be said that all employment or all jobs programs have a salutary effect on that relationship. Research by Wofford and Elliott showed that the duration and intensity of work can actually promote delinquency.²⁷ Steinberg and Dornbusch also reported that working in excess of 15–20 hours per week during the school year was correlated with diminished school performance and increased alcohol and drug use.²⁸

Wofford reported that young people who had jobs had a higher incidence of minor delinquency than did non-working juveniles. She hypothesized that employment provides freedom that young people cannot manage, and that “the jobs that adolescents hold generally promote little social bonding to adults and include simple, repetitive tasks requiring little skill or training.”²⁹ She recommended focusing resources on programs to prepare young people to pursue worthwhile, higher paying jobs after they finish high school.

Still, there is ample evidence that employment does lead to better outcomes for delinquent young people. Elliott reported that meaningful, gainful employment correlates significantly with youthful offenders’ “maturing out” of delinquent behavior as they enter young adulthood.³⁰ Elliott, Huizinga, and Ageton reported that the combined forces of inadequate socialization, strains between occupational and educational aspirations, and neighborhood social disorganization can lead to weak bonding to conventional social values and activities in the family, school, and community that in turn can result in a delinquent lifestyle.³¹

Troy Duster considers the disproportionate number of African-American young people who are both unemployed and involved in the criminal justice system to be no accident.³² The workforce shift from manufacturing jobs traditionally located in inner cities populated by blacks, to service sector jobs increasingly located in suburbs populated by whites, has led to the development of a potentially permanent underclass. Duster believes that the future of youth employment efforts must be in the creation of programs that provide “clear, long-term linkages into growing careers.”³³ This conclusion is echoed in research across the discipline. A major report on employment and training programs by the U.S. Department of Labor perhaps put it best: “The limited evaluation evidence that is available suggests that temporary employment programs without

additional services bring little or no post-program benefits to disadvantaged youth.”³⁴

Well-considered and implemented programs that promote economic self-sufficiency can help reduce delinquency and promote earning capacity. And research shows that incarceration generally worsens job prospects.³⁵ According to R. B. Freeman, it is incarceration, not just arrest, that is associated with poorer employment prospects in adults.³⁶ Moreover, not just any job or job-training program will work to help young people earn living wages and stay out of trouble.

WHAT PRACTITIONERS THINK

Practitioners echo much of the research. Youth justice experts we interviewed individually and in a focus group discussed the barriers to helping economic self-sufficiency for court-involved youth and the fact that creative solutions are desperately needed

Priorities

Correctional historian David Rothman said, “When custody meets care, custody always wins.” As our nation’s juvenile justice system has focused more on institutionalization and has mixed the rehabilitative focus with a punitive approach, many programs have suffered. Young

offenders who at one time would have been sentenced to community settings are now placed in institutions. Once, incarcerated juveniles re-entered community life gradually; now, many are simply sent from facilities to manage the best they can. Economic self-sufficiency programs that formerly allowed participation by young offenders now bar delinquent youth. Corrections administrators who

JOB CORPS

Since 1964, the Job Corps has offered opportunity to nearly 2 million low-income young people. The public-private partnership has been found to work, and to work well. Within six months of program completion, Job Corps graduates were five times more likely to have earned a high school diploma or GED than were young people in a comparison group. They also got and kept better jobs, were less likely to be involved with the courts, and they were even healthier than their counterparts. What’s the bad news? For the most part, the program is closed to court-involved youth.

For more information about the Job Corps, visit www.jobcorps.org.

contributed to the youth development discussion are left out of that conversation.

The administrators we met were frustrated by these developments because they hamper efforts to return youthful offenders to the community. Absent educational and employment opportunities, there is little for ex-offenders to do other than return to crime.

The corrections administrators admitted that they place other matters before youth employment and training issues, which are not always high on the priority list. In a world of shrinking budgets and overcrowded facilities,

custodial care comes first, followed by other legally mandated items, such as health care and education. The administrators often are barely able to afford required programs—much less “add-ons” like employment and training programs.

Finally, many simply stated that employment and training programs cannot or should not be first priority. The care of juveniles faced with a constellation of challenges—multiple behavior problems, emotional or learning disabilities, family and neighborhood dysfunction, and substance abuse issues—seems to place employment well down in the hierarchy of needs. Rather, it is as part of a continuum of care, or a comprehensive approach to youth development, that administrators see employment and training programs having their greatest influence—agreeing with much of what the research has revealed.

WHAT DO PRACTITIONERS SAY?

- Higher priority for workforce development
- Stigma of court involvement hard to overcome
- Geographic obstacles hamper matching ex-offenders with jobs
- Juvenile justice philosophies prone to inconsistency
- Creative solutions vital

Stigma

Many practitioners said the stigma of involvement with the juvenile justice system poses significant challenges for workforce development. As public attitudes have shifted from promoting rehabilitation to demanding punishment, and as communities have hardened against youthful offenders, youth corrections practitioners have found that acceptance of youth employment and training programs has been affected: Employers and volunteers are harder

MICHAEL'S STORY

In April 1996, 16-year-old Michael L. was arrested for a Baltimore robbery. His trip to the city jail (juveniles arrested for robbery in Maryland are automatically charged as adults) was his first.

During his time in jail—and later in the Maryland penal system where he was imprisoned with the general population of adults—he experienced and witnessed frequent incidents of violence and sexual harassment perpetrated by adults against juveniles. He and other young men were forced to fight in “square dances” set up by facility guards; a practice later documented by Human Rights Watch in a report detailing conditions for juvenile offenders housed in Maryland’s adult jails. He received little in the way of vocational or educational training, and he was sent home after 2 years. He was seen infrequently by a parole officer, and then only for urinalysis and brief check-ins. He drifted into a dead-end job in a fast-food restaurant, and he began to worry about returning to his old life.

Still, Michael was fortunate in several ways: His family was supportive, and he had been involved in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program from the age of 12. Two Big Brothers had kept up with him while

he was serving time and after his release. One connected him with Amnesty International, the human rights organization, which was starting a campaign against jailing juveniles with adults. Michael went on Amnesty’s lecture circuit, speaking before audiences in Minnesota; Washington, D.C.; and Oslo, Norway.

He also applied to the Job Corps program. When his application was rejected because of his criminal record, Big Brother Marc Schindler, of the Youth Law Center, and others intervened, and the Job Corps granted an exception. Michael stayed with the program, and he continues to speak out against jailing youth with adults.

Michael’s story has a happy ending: Supporting a youthful offender can give positive direction to a life. But his story also is about overcoming obstacles that simply should not exist. An 18-year-old has nearly 50 years to go before retirement. To navigate that time without training or education is an opportunity wasted.

Insult is added to injury in the failure of the juvenile justice system to provide meaningful follow-up and transitional programming. The rejection of his Job Corps application was reversed only because of special intervention—hardly a resource available to most youthful ex-prisoners.

to recruit, and there is resentment about “bad” youth competing with “good” youth for jobs and employment resources.

What’s more, administrators and other practitioners point out, there are structural obstacles in employment and training programs for youthful offenders. Youth corrections administrators almost unanimously report that young people with criminal records are denied entrance into their states’ Job Corps programs. And by requiring federally funded job-training programs to attain high placement rates, federal regulations have established a practice of “creaming” that discourages participation by difficult-to-place applicants in the very programs from which they could benefit.

A related challenge is that many young people obtain employment through family and community networks. For many court-involved youth, the same detached communities and dysfunctional families that foster delinquency in the first place inhibit the formation of employment networks. Even when families and other support systems are there to provide, juvenile justice systems often fail to incorporate their efforts and leverage their help.

Geography

Many administrators reported that the training schools and residential programs they operate are located far from their participants’ home neighborhoods. The public mandate for increased attention to security is such that young people are less able to make the transition to their home communities through furloughs, halfway houses, or independent-living arrangements. Young people are often incarcerated too far away to find jobs in their home communities or attend community-based job-training programs that match the local labor market.

Philosophy

The current philosophy that guides youth justice is definitely not about creating “clear, long term linkages into growing careers” (as Duster recommended). Punitive mandates mean youthful offenders simply “do time” or participate in community service efforts designed more to exact retribution than to promote career development. Even restorative-justice approaches can emphasize earning quick cash to repay victims instead of carefully channeling troubled young people into life-changing careers.

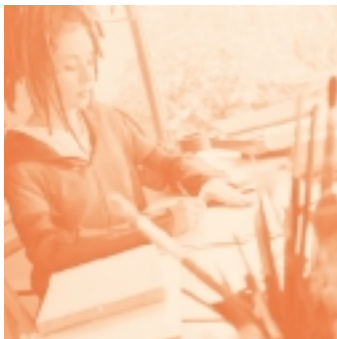
In a profession increasingly conscious of high-notoriety youthful cases gone awry, insuring against one spectacular crime can sometimes come at the expense of sensible programming decisions for many. In fact, the political reality of juvenile justice is that the reward comes when public safety is protected by locking young people up. There is not much accountability for what those same offenders do after release, even if recidivism is rampant.

Creativity

Despite all the challenges, the youth corrections administrators we met with showed a commitment to the rehabilitative ethic and viewed employment and training efforts as a crucial step toward that goal. Some emphasized the importance of entrepreneurial efforts to

teach young people job skills and job creativity, giving examples of enterprises operating out of their facilities in cooperation with local businesses. One spoke about the importance of interagency collaboration in creating a public-private job development board.

Today's economy provides neither the stability nor the job security enjoyed by earlier generations of American workers. Now, the most significant indicator of potential earnings and employability is lifelong access to education and skills training. Those who fail to comprehend this are the most vulnerable to dislocation and disruption. But those who can adapt to the changing workplace, acquiring new information and skills, are most likely to find continued employability and greater financial security.



There are implications for young people. The increasingly competitive global marketplace demands the development of a highly trained and adaptable workforce. Public schools, which at one time adequately prepared vast numbers of Americans for careers in the low-skilled manufacturing jobs generated by the industrial economy, have not kept pace with the demands or the expectations of the postindustrial marketplace. The well-paying and relatively secure low-skill jobs that enabled earlier generations of marginally educated young Americans to support families, purchase homes, and raise their economic status have largely disappeared.

Many of the nation's underprepared young people face frustration and economic insecurity. Despite record-low unemployment at the beginning of the new century, many inner-city communities were still experiencing double-digit unemployment among their youth. Young people in these communities who can find work often do not have the skills they need to advance and earn family-sustaining wages. We also will need to help them develop the necessary personal attributes (soft skills) to successfully navigate economic and workplace change if they are to earn progressively higher wages.

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

Here's what we can glean from history, research, and the comments of practitioners:

- Preparing young people for economic self-sufficiency, like youth development overall, cannot happen in isolation from recognizing the other strengths and needs young people have.
- By themselves, temporary employment programs do little to reduce delinquency.
- To make the most of the capacity of employment and training programs to reduce delinquency, the numerous inherent barriers must be overcome—creatively.
- The swing in the punishment–rehabilitation pendulum toward a more punitive approach cannot be considered a positive development for the future of court-involved youth.

methodology

The field research on promising policy and program initiatives at the state and local level was based on an examination of descriptive information and qualitative data that reveal the details about program- or policy-specific conditions. NYEC used telephone interviews to develop an illustrative case study that provided examples of promising strategies.

To learn about effective programs, we contacted researchers, policymakers, funders, and practitioners to identify 30 efforts that displayed promising practices for preparing youthful offenders for successful education and work-related outcomes. That list was pared to 15 by

contacting each program for more information and then critically applying the PEPNet (Promising and Effective Practices Network) criteria for effective practice.

Six of the 15 programs had received national recognition from PEPNet for their youth initiatives, and all programs were chosen based on their application of the principles reflected in the PEPNet criteria and on their demonstration of exemplary practices. The PEPNet criteria were used as a benchmark because they examine youth employment programs through the lens of youth development principles that promote positive, long-term success for at-risk youth. And although not all 15 programs have been subjected to external evaluation, their methods, service delivery and management strategies, organizational ethos and mission, and their staff and youth culture exhibit a wide array of youth development commonalities and the actualization of assets-based approaches.

As a result, PEPNet and the selected programs can act as ideal mechanisms for beginning to apply youth development principles and outcomes to the field of juvenile justice and to provide concrete models for replication elsewhere.

EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS

- Identify programs
- Visit sites
- Interview directors, staff, participants
- Synthesize information

PEPNET

The Promising and Effective Practices Network (PEPNet), created and managed by the National Youth Employment Coalition, highlights what works, documents successes, plans improvements, gives recognition, shares information, and contributes to a database of effective practice. Policymakers use PEPNet to gain a clear picture of what a high-quality youth program looks like, thus informing policy decisions and improving their assessment and selection of youth initiatives. Funders use it to distinguish outstanding programs and help grantees increase capacity.

PEPNet's framework is based on its Criteria for Effective Practices, developed by a diverse working group of youth employment and development practitioners, researchers, employers, and policymakers. The criteria fall into five broad categories: purpose and activities, organization and management, youth development, workforce development, and evidence of success.

Initiatives that meet PEPNet's criteria are selected annually from a pool of applicants by a review board of a representative group of professionals. PEPNet has recognized 61 exemplary initiatives in the United States and Canada, including those that work specifically with court-involved youth.

Information about PEPNet's many resources is available from www.nyec.org/pepnet, by calling 202-659-1064, or by sending a fax request to 202-659-0399.

Site visits involved a four-step process. First was a tour of grounds and facilities to get a detailed picture what services were offered, how they were delivered, and whether the environment was supportive to participants and conducive to the learning process.

Second, we conducted an extensive interview with each site director. This conversation explored the philosophy and driving focus of the program's educational and employment efforts; elicited specific information about what kind of academic instruction, vocational training, and support services the program delivered; and examined how programs accomplished the goal of imparting skills and services. The interviews also covered staff development, outcome measures, accountability, and other features unique to the program. We also collected performance data on each organization to quantify success at minimizing reincarceration and providing positive educational and employment outcomes.

Third, we interviewed staff members to gain their perspective on the organization and its effectiveness. These interviews explored more fully the various facets of the program to determine whether staff members felt they were integral to the program's mission, believed they were

empowered to strive for its successful attainment, and seemed truly dedicated to the improvement of the lives of at-risk youth.

Finally, we interviewed program participants to get a sense of whether their expectations, experiences, and outcomes matched the observations staff and program directors.

After the visits, we prepared a short report on each site to describe programs, identify the population served and the point in the juvenile justice continuum at which it intervened, list outcome data, and, most important, define exemplary practices. Synthesis of the reports revealed commonalties among programs that appear to enable them to better serve court-involved juveniles' educational

POLICY INITIATIVES

- Survey field to identify initiatives
- Survey experts and gather data
- Synthesize information

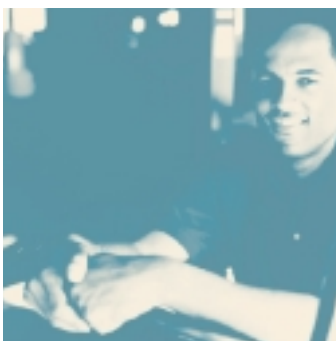
and vocational needs. The Program Profiles section of this toolkit presents that information.

Sampling of policy initiatives had two parts. First, national experts in the juvenile justice and workforce development systems, including policymakers, researchers, and representatives from national organizations, were contacted by telephone and through a mail survey of members of the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators.

Respondents were asked structured survey questions about funding, outcome measures, and other basic information for policy initiatives they believed had promise. NYEC compared respondents' suggestions with criteria set forth

by NYEC and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. A group of promising policies and initiatives was chosen, and a second, in-depth telephone survey was conducted of the policymakers and initiative administrators who were instrumental in developing or implementing them.

That survey focused on five key areas: collaboration among systems or between systems and the private sector; policy and system flexibility; youth development; innovative approaches; and funding, support, and replication. The findings and descriptions are included in the Policy Profiles section of the toolkit.



programs and policies

There have been few systematic efforts to identify the key elements of programs that prepare court-involved young people for economic self-sufficiency. Public and private institutions usually focus on prevention and on crisis intervention to mitigate the costs to society of juvenile crime and delinquency, rather than exploring how to more effectively habilitate, rehabilitate, and reintegrate these young offenders so they can become productive members of society.

SUCCESS DEFINED

In contrast to much of juvenile justice programming, the 15 programs highlighted in the toolkit operate under comprehensive principles that view young adults and their needs holistically. The programs apply an assets-based approach instead of focusing on their participants' perceived deficits. They demonstrate that youth development principles can be applied to the field of juvenile justice, because those principles support the bottom-line outcomes that practitioners, administrators, and policymakers in both fields must produce. Whether we as a society want to be tough on crime or not, the recent history of juvenile justice has demonstrated that building more prisons, placing more young people in adult facilities, and imposing more punitive sanctions is not working.

Each program has found ways to advance youth development principles despite the limits imposed on organizations that serve juvenile offender populations. And the fact that they all have recidivism rates below 20 percent raises some questions: Is it more cost effective and “tough on crime” to place young people in a juvenile correctional institution or in a program like the ones we found? Which alternative is in the best interests of the community? Which best serves the needs of the individual? Perhaps by shying away from infusing youth development into the work of juvenile justice, we have confused being tough on crime with being tough on criminals, and in the process we have contributed to the crippling of a generation of largely minority young people.

Commitment to Rehabilitation

Successful programs are committed to the development and achievement of young adults; that's obvious. But the reality is that many youth-serving organizations neither exhibit a clear sense of purpose nor have a firm dedication to a stated mission. In contrast, despite the difficult population they serve, the 15 youth-serving projects are more rehabilitation projects than disciplinary programs, resources rather than crutches, intent on empowering young offenders rather than taking control and running their lives.

PROGRAM PROFILES

Avon Park Youth Academy, Avon Park, Florida, private residential adjudication for 16- to 18-year-old male offenders

Career Exploration Project, New York City, alternative sentencing for first-time felony offenders aged 15–17

Corrections Clearinghouse, Olympia, Washington, workforce development for adjudicated juvenile and adult offenders

Crispus Attucks YouthBuild, York, Pennsylvania, workforce development charter school with a building trades emphasis

CUNY Catch, Brooklyn, New York, transitional programming for juveniles leaving the Rikers Island penal institution

Dayton YouthBuild, Dayton, Ohio, workforce development charter school with a building trades emphasis.

Ferris School for Boys, Wilmington, Delaware, residential adjudication of boys aged 13–18

Fresh Start, Baltimore, Maryland, education and vocational training for offenders aged 16–20

Friends of Island Academy, New York City, private, nonprofit, voluntary transitional programming for ex-offenders aged 10–21

Gulf Coast Trades Center, New Waverly, Texas, residential adjudication of offenders aged 16–19

Mayor's Juvenile Justice Action Plan, San Francisco, six programs for at-risk youth and chronic offenders aged 10–18

Omega Boys Club, San Francisco, violence prevention project for young adults

Project RIO–Y (Re-Integration of Offenders–Youth), Austin, Texas, voluntary workforce development for incarcerated young people aged 16–21

Tampa Marine Institute, Tampa, Florida, private, nonprofit, nonresidential adjudication of offenders aged 14–18

T-CAP North, Fort Worth, Texas, alternative sentencing for offenders aged 10–17



Continuum of Care

Most generally follow a wraparound model of services in a continuum of youth development activities so young people become productive citizens who contribute, rather than detract, from the safety of the community. They teach self-sufficiency to young adults who can take responsibility for their own growth and development and for progressing toward educational, vocational, and personal success. Wraparound service models—assets-based approaches—provide holistic education and support, and they work in collaboration with other service providers and often the community itself to develop young people’s talents, skills, and current resources as a way to ameliorate their weaknesses.

An organization’s commitment to the rehabilitation of young offenders must go beyond mission statements to encompass the way staff, and the program itself, view the participants. Juvenile correctional facilities must balance security and discipline with the freedom young people need to pursue high-quality educational and career opportunities. So there is a conundrum: How do you “modify” behavior when young offenders often do not respond to traditional instruction or support? How do you empower a population that has used its own power in violence and destruction?

Successful programs use preventive care, assessment, and intervention to meet the various needs of different populations. All of that is important, but the most fundamental parts of a continuum of care are the postprogram supports and services, because young offenders have needs that go beyond quick fixes or single cures. Individualized treatment plans can target specific weaknesses, needs, and strengths and help reinforce the skills and beliefs needed long after graduating from a program or leaving an institution. Without help in making the transition to gainful employment, job training can be a waste of time. There is no point offering academic instruction if there is no support for finishing high school or preparing for college.

WHAT DO THEY HAVE IN COMMON?

- Commitment to rehabilitation
- Continuum of care
- Integrated education
- System collaboration
- Support structures
- Accountability

MARC'S STORY

It has been said that the measure of a man's life is not where he is now but how far he has come from where he started. By any set of standards, Marc Washington has traveled a long way.

Marc was born into poverty in South Jamaica, Queens, one of New York City's poorest neighborhoods. As an adolescent, he became intimate with the streets. His brother and best friend were killed in drug-related shootings. Without viable options for his future, without hope in the promise of a life worth living, Marc was trapped in an endless, hopeless cycle of violence. He was quoted in a New York *Times* article: "We all have one or two defining moments in our lives. Mine came running across a rooftop with a gun pointed at my back. Something inside me snapped, and at that point I knew I didn't want to die."

Marc was arrested in 1993 on drug charges and spent six months on Rikers Island, New York City's largest prison. When he left, Marc found help through Friends of Island Academy (FOIA), which works with students enrolled in Rikers Island's high schools. FOIA's staff members believed Marc could succeed, and they challenged him to extend himself to obtain his goals. He finished high school, received college preparatory assistance, and was trained in the soft skills he needed to prepare himself for the world of work.

After he left Rikers, he stayed with the program. Marc got a job as a janitor and then worked at a clothing store, eventually becoming assistant manager. He also worked with FOIA's GIIFT Pack, a group that does counseling and outreach in New York City high schools. He enrolled in John Jay College in New York City, and he graduated with a B.A. in government. He won the Robin Hood Foundation's John F. Kennedy Hero Award. He plans to attend law school.

Marc has not achieved all of his goals, but he has managed to do something that few individuals can, regardless of life circumstances: He transcended his environment to provide a life for himself better than the one to which he was born. How? Through his own will, his own skills and determination, and through the support and guidance of FOIA.

Postprogram supports allow young people to continue making progress, they provide a mechanism for organizations to follow up successes, and they form a structure from which to gather data about program outcomes. High-quality postprogram efforts are sustained for at least one year and use a combination of passive and active approaches that allow young people open access to services and counseling; keep them connected with other “alumni” from the program; and offer direct and concrete assistance in getting and keeping jobs, progressing up the economic ladder, continuing their education, and living independently.

Integrated Education

Education is the gateway to economic self-sufficiency. Wraparound service models incorporate holistic educational curricula designed to lead young offenders away from the antiachievement culture and the learning deficits so many of them have toward what they need to succeed in the workplace. It is only recently that youth programs have begun to promote academic credentials as the ticket to viable, long-term economic opportunity. Education is the best plan for economic success. A high school graduate will earn \$420,000 more over a lifetime than will a dropout. A college graduate will earn a million more.

At the same time, the school-to-work movement in public and alternative education systems has demonstrated that

economic self-sufficiency requires not just academic credentials, but hard skills (field-specific expertise), soft skills (preemployment skills and appropriate workplace attitudes and habits), and work-based experience. A diploma is useless to someone who cannot construct a proper résumé, speak effectively in an interview, or acclimate to the workplace.

All of the programs highlighted emphasize workforce training through curricula that are relevant, engaging, and practical: Fresh Start’s chair and boat production operations simulate the real-world working environment. YouthBuild participants acquire appropriate workplace skills and gain building trades certification as they construct low-income housing.

Another important program element is an effort to connect vocational training with the demands of an ever-changing economy. Several of the programs collaborate with employers to help shape their curricula to ensure responsiveness. The Corrections Clearinghouse connects youth offenders with computer training and repair workshops, Avon Park Youth Academy and the Tampa Marine Institute (TMI) educate participants in the application of various kinds of computer software, and Dayton YouthBuild contracts with local technology firms to provide training and employment opportunities.

LEGITIMIZING YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: A CATCH-22

Regardless of effectiveness, youth service providers are caught in a bind. The debate over punishment versus reform has swung away from reform and rehabilitation and toward protecting public safety by punishing criminals. Youth service programs have seen their funding cut and are being challenged to do more with less and to provide high-quality outcomes with a minimum of resources. To secure additional funding and resources, youth organizations must legitimize their work through concrete outcome data for recidivism rates, academic achievement, successful employment, and other positive long-term effects. But without funding, how can the programs develop and implement the systems they need to track results in the first place?

To be truly effective, youth service providers need to find a way to move beyond this debilitating cycle. How? Perhaps the key is in the programs' not allowing themselves to be subject to the whim of a single entity, institution, or government body. It is no coincidence that most organizations that offer diverse, high-quality programming also have diverse funding streams and have acquired the expertise necessary to use a variety of mechanisms and sources to leverage additional funds. Unfortunately, the reality is that providers who serve a criminal population must do more than just serve young adults. They must become experts in the economics of youth policy and youth development. And youth development initiatives that do not depend on a single funding source will be more stable, more successful in service delivery, and more likely to secure the resources necessary to track their success. Success breeds more success, but it is also true that success breeds additional funding.

Finally, the programs recognize that workforce development is an important medium for connecting young people with positive adult role models. Many of the programs, such as the Career Exploration Project (CexP), train young people for the workplace and then provide internships with business owners who can act first as supervisors and mentors and later as job references.

Effective youth programs equip participants with a variety of life skills for coping with their daily problems and the emotional and mental challenges of school and work. For instance, the Omega Boys Club is a violence prevention effort that trains young people, through a variety of media, to avoid violence and consciously and actively control the course of their own lives. Friends of Island Academy uses peer leadership to educate high school students about the dangers of life in the streets and how to harness their own experiences for a positive purpose. Those programs challenge young offenders to be responsible for their own growth and development and equip them with the mental, emotional, and social skills they need to become productive adults.

Although working toward academic progress is important, successful programs also demonstrate that some elements of instruction are common to all forms of effective education and skills training. Effective programs use a

student-centered approach, allowing participants to participate. That means they cooperate in discussions, ask questions, do group work, learn from one another, and shape the content of their learning objectives.

High-quality juvenile justice programs also individualize instruction as much as possible. Staff members work to develop individualized learning plans based on young persons' strengths, weaknesses, needs, and desires, and they encourage participants to refine and improve their plans. Innovative software, such as the New Century program (used by the Avon Park Youth Academy and TMI), creates individual, need-specific educational curricula. One-on-one instruction, tutoring, mentoring, and counseling also are important to most programs, as is specific instruction for students with physical, mental, or learning disabilities. Most of the programs have special facilities for challenged students and employ special education instructors.

Successful initiatives attempt to engage the learner. Whether through entrepreneurial activities, multimedia technology, urban youth culture media, real-world experience, or a system of rewards and incentives, success results when participants are involved in their own education.

The exemplary programs do not simply provide academic, vocational, or life skills training. They attempt to prepare

ENTREPRENEURSHIP: INVESTING YOUTH IN THEIR OWN DEVELOPMENT

Many young people, especially traditionally underserved youth, suffer from a perceived lack of significance. They do not believe they can change their personal circumstances, let alone their neighborhoods, schools, or workplaces. They have neither the hope nor the confidence they need to move ahead.

One mechanism that has proven overwhelmingly successful in combating these feelings of powerlessness is affording young people a chance to become entrepreneurs. Fresh Start's practical work-based experience includes a strict attendance policy and standards for workplace behavior, but it also allows participants to take total responsibility—and have complete accountability—for their work. The participants run every aspect of a chair production business and a boat-building company, and their daily assignments include construction, developing advertising materials, producing financial statements, and more. There is a different foreman each day, and all company profits are divided based on work performance and the demonstration of appropriate workforce behaviors in a given week.

Participants learn the value of skill development and the demands of the workplace. They learn that all of them are important to the business; they have a chance to produce real change and concrete results. The obvious benefit is in the paycheck, but participants also learn confidence and earn respect as valuable employees of a company.

participants for employment through educational models that successfully integrate these various forms of education. As the service-learning movement has shown, all students learn best when they are challenged to make the connections between the various aspects of their educational experience, when they can relate what they learn to the real world, and when they can reflect with authentic insight about the nature of their experiences.

It is not enough for young offenders to gain literacy; they must develop the technological skills required to succeed in the global economy. It's not sufficient for young people to know how to operate machinery; they must be able to fill out a job application and compose a résumé. It's not adequate for young people to have all of those academic and vocational skills; they need to learn to channel their emotions into productive endeavors.

Collaboration

Successful programs not only offer a wide range of services, they also recognize what they cannot offer. Effective programs collaborate and form connections with other agencies: employers, law enforcement agencies, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, psychologists, hospitals, family-planning agencies, and social services. The key is that those programs do not allow participants to fail simply because their own

resources or areas of expertise are inadequate to meet all needs. Often, participants receive or are referred to all services through a single point of contact—a case manager. This allows for expedient assessment, intervention, and coordination among an array of service providers. More specific forms of collaboration come in the development of formal connections with employers for internships, apprenticeships, and job placement and with social services agencies for the administrative needs of ex-offenders (foster care placements or transitions, Social Security cards, drivers' licenses, health insurance).

Support Structures

Effective services, regardless of mission, connect youthful offenders with a support network that is consistent, compassionate, and challenging in its efforts to motivate and counsel young adults toward success. Many youthful offenders suffer most from a lack of connection with caring adults that can lead to emotional problems, such as depression and poor anger management skills, all of which can emerge as roadblocks to positive development.

Mentoring and counseling programs can offer young people the one-on-one attention they crave and can be the most powerful mechanisms for reinforcing a program's educational philosophy. Most of us find it difficult to accept advice from people we do not trust and that is

TRANSITIONAL CARE: CATCHING YOUNG OFFENDERS BEFORE THEY RETURN TO CRIME

The City University of New York (CUNY) Catch program demonstrates the importance and the efficacy of an established transition program. CUNY Catch has educational and vocational services available at three college campuses for juveniles leaving incarceration at New York City's Rikers Island. To ensure that young people know about the program, CUNY Catch starts at Rikers, where most at offenders will begin the transition back home. Like most young offenders, when Rikers inmates return home they face the same personal, familial, and institutional barriers to success that blocked their progress in the first place. Even for those with skills training, the lack of vision for the future and insufficient educational and employment opportunities on the outside can lead right back to the institution.

CUNY Catch offers motivational and informational seminars and workshops for juveniles while they are still at Rikers. Everyone gets a card advertising the program's services, and CUNY Catch staff members make appointments with inmates in the days before they leave the facility. The young people generally are receptive because Catch offers hope and possibilities that institutional rules and restrictions cannot provide. Perhaps the greatest testimony is that many young offenders will, after serving time in another facility, return to CUNY Catch—some of them years after first receiving a card.

antithetical to our norms of behavior. Successful mentoring programs recognize that young people are more likely to thrive where they are connected to like-minded adults and peers with whom to develop lasting, meaningful relationships.

The Ferris School for Boys helps adjudicated juvenile delinquents overcome their problems primarily through the HOSTS (Help One Student To Succeed) mentoring program. HOSTs mentors are trained in nationally standardized curricula that encompass academic, social, and life skills training. They meet with students at least one hour each week for a commitment of no less than six weeks.



Accountability

Successful programs are not content merely to develop and implement the principles mentioned thus far; they constantly challenge their own success and search for new ways to improve. High-quality youth-serving organizations recognize the extraordinary needs of our young people and are committed to holding themselves and their programs accountable. Indeed, many of the sites conduct monthly or even weekly assessments that include graduation competency tests, school retention rates, and rigorous tracking of recidivism. All of the programs highlighted are exemplary not simply because their practices are ideologically sound but because they have developed case management systems to track their program participants and to produce tangible, measurable results.

Few programs have the time or resources to contract with outside research groups to perform independent evaluations. They have found that the best way to measure program success is to rank the desired outcomes and then find a relevant standard against which to evaluate the

effort. Juvenile justice practitioners consider recidivism a key measure of how well a program is providing for the safety and stability of the community and the rehabilitation of the individual. Youth development focuses on the transition to productive citizenship and adulthood. Most of the 15 programs measure success both ways, first by tracking rearrest and reincarceration rates and subsequently by tracking school retention and advancement and the rate and duration of employment.

The average juvenile justice institution has a recidivism rate between 50 percent and 70 percent. TMI, Gulf Coast Trades Center, Fresh Start, and Friends of Island Academy all have recidivism rates below 20 percent. Crispus Attucks YouthBuild has a 5 percent recidivism rate among the 74 percent of the participants previously involved with the juvenile justice system; three-quarters of all participants are employed after graduation. Almost 90 percent of participants in Dayton YouthBuild are employed or in school after graduation. Avon Park Youth Academy has a 78 percent rate of successful program completion; 40 percent of participants earn a GED or high school diploma, 78 percent receive vocational certification, and 81 percent are still employed after 6 months. Eighty percent of Project RIO–Y's (Re-Integration of Offenders–Youth) graduates are engaged in a “constructive activity”: part-time employment, school enrollment, or vocational

training. All CExP graduates pursue further education, and two-thirds of them proceed to other internships or jobs; half of those young adults continue to work 6 months after completing the program.

Our society can no longer afford to consider services for juvenile offenders solely in the dichotomy of punishment or altruism. As a new generation of young adults becomes responsible for the nation's health and wealth, it is in our best interest to take seriously the work of providing high-quality educational and vocational programs for youthful offenders.

There are successful programs that help juvenile offenders and at-risk young people achieve on a high level. Locking kids up is not the answer to their problems any more than it relieves the problems they pose to society. It is equally unproductive to throw money at juvenile offenders—even by creating programs—if those efforts are no more than a flurry of unconnected, unconsidered actions.

Youth service policymakers and providers must engage in a goal-directed examination of why some of the young people who have been served have still failed, how those young people can best be reached, and what is required for their success above and beyond their time in a structured environment.

The programs in the toolkit are not perfect—few of them exhibit strength in all the principles outlined in this overview. But they are models for finding ways to answer some of our questions, for creating a network and resource base of effective practices and programs, and for starting to prove that “nothing works” is simply an excuse used by those who are not truly dedicated to finding solutions.

TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

We examined programs that are exemplary; yet even within that group, some elements stand out as exceptional. Closer examination illuminates what it takes for success, and it can highlight the specific methods of empowering young adults that are lacking in many youth organizations.

Learning: A Multidisciplinary Approach

The Life Learning Academy in San Francisco, which is part of the Mayor’s Juvenile Justice Action Plan, focuses its curriculum on project-based learning. Students major in one of the four elements: earth, wind, water, and fire. Water majors study oceanography and marine biology, learn boat repair and sailing, take swimming and scuba lessons, visit aquariums and marine biology labs, and work closely with the local harbormaster and the Maritime Museum. Students learn the subject matter

and gain useful skills, but more important, they physically experience the relevance of the material they study.

The best programs have participants conduct primary research, manage projects, run their own businesses, form student governments, and help to shape curricula. Those activities are powerful motivators to develop self-confidence and the inner resolve necessary for success.

Incentives and Rewards: Positive, not Punitive

Crispus Attucks YouthBuild and Fresh Start use wages as an incentive and reward. At Crispus Attucks, students are paid stipends both for academic work and for construction site training, and the amount of money they earn is based on weekly evaluations of their effort, attitude, and improvements in performance. The largest monthly paycheck is \$750—so the money clearly is not a living wage—but it is an effective reinforcement tool.

Participants are given weekly indicators of how well they are doing, and they are forced to confront their performance in a tangible way.

Similarly, at Fresh Start, the profits from two enterprises are divided among the workers, although not everyone receives the same amount. Money is distributed based on a weekly point system that considers work performance,

cooperation, motivation, professionalism, and ability to stay on task.

These creative uses of wages demonstrate how external devices can be used to evaluate and reward promising participants. Often, young offenders grow up in environments that are unstable and with adults who are undependable, so there is little systematic recognition or reward for a job well done. Youth service providers should have a tangible, relevant means of reinforcing positive behaviors (rather than only punishing negative ones), thus creating a fixed, dependable set of expectations that sometimes will even exert a healthy form of peer pressure.

WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE?

- Multidisciplinary learning
- Incentives, not punishment
- Peer leadership
- Staff development
- Youth culture

Peer Leadership: Powerful Role Modeling

Juvenile offenders often are victims of a system of bad advice, bad information, and bad role models—all of which serve to reinforce bad behavior. They can come to believe that the only way to receive attention or control over their lives is through behavior that is destructive, violent, or both. A youth program can offer the world's best educational and vocational services, but if the peer culture doesn't support it, no one will take advantage of the offerings. What's more, young people who struggle to do better but who find themselves ostracized by peers cannot develop the support systems that are so instrumental to success.

Friends of Island Academy attempts to break this cycle through the GIIFT Pack (Guys and Girls Insight on Imprisonment for Teens), which engages young people with their peers in group leadership activities that focus on the development of positive beliefs, values, and behaviors. GIIFT Pack participants share their experiences with at-risk young people in schools and community-based organizations to teach them how to distance themselves from the beliefs and behaviors that prevent success. The program reaches about 2000 young people a year, and participants have been incorporated as permanent members of the guidance offices of two South Bronx high schools.

GIIFT Pack participants reap the obvious rewards of developing interpersonal, communication, and organizing skills, and they achieve a sense of empowerment. The group-based nature of the project allows young people to support one another in their leadership roles and to provide a powerful mechanism of positive reinforcement. The benefits carry over to other areas of life as well, laying the groundwork for positive relationships that will support future endeavors and helping participants become familiar with a culture of success.

Staff: A Guiding Philosophy

The directors of CExP and TMI take a goal-directed approach to staff development. CExP staff members are taught service provision through mandatory training that extends over 20 hours and includes conflict management and family-based intervention techniques. CExP also recruits graduates of the project because of their unique perspective and knowledge—and for their compassion—which participants find immensely valuable.

TMI staff members receive up to 80 hours of orientation and training focused on helping them to offer counsel and support that is effective and caring. Every staff member at TMI acts as an advisor for a group of young people. TMI tries to ensure that the staff make-up is ethnically diverse, but that a range of styles and approaches is available

(disciplinarians, friends, counselors). Every participant should be able to connect with at least one staff member and develop a long-lasting relationship with a positive adult role model. All staff members have personal development plans to improve their service capacity and performance. They receive monthly training, and they meet each day to discuss their work.

Psychology and Youth Culture

The Omega Boys' Club stands apart from most youth service organizations in that its efforts are not directed mainly at education or workforce development. Omega's programming is grounded in one simple belief: Young people cannot succeed at work or at school until they are psychologically prepared to meet the challenges of those experiences. Omega has developed a life prescription that attacks self-limiting belief structures and teaches new rules to live by that will help young people "stay alive and free."

Omega's psychological assessments and interventions are powerful because they meet youth "where they are."

Most juvenile offenders are not socialized through home, school, or faith-based organizations so much as they are by popular culture, the media and entertainment industries, and, most powerfully, by peers whose focus is often antithetical to productive citizenship. Omega's efforts are directed at challenging young offenders to examine the

cultural norms that lead to success and then using positive, relevant frameworks to empower them to survive on their own, regardless of external influences. The Omega program is not based on the reward–punishment dichotomy; it is grounded in personal motivation.

POLICY INITIATIVES THAT WORK

The programs highlighted in the toolkit are the efforts of the entrepreneurial, the committed, the creative, and the determined to find and implement ways to rescue juvenile offenders and at-risk youth—often despite public policy. All too often, these innovators assert, public policy is a major barrier to, rather than an enabler of, good programming. Until public policy promotes the development of collaborative, comprehensive, innovative programs, there will be no attaining the goal of reaching the largest possible number of young offenders. If we are to move beyond islands of excellence in seas of mediocrity, public policy must acknowledge, advance, build, and sustain environments that promote effective practice.

Nevertheless, the set of practices and principles distilled from those programs can inform the work of state and local policymakers challenged with preparing juvenile offenders for self-sufficiency and productive citizenship. As agencies and policymakers search for the most effective

means to promote strategies that work, promising approaches can emerge from policy strategies that, even in the broadest sense, provide flexibility in workforce and juvenile justice systems.

Many of the 19 policies profiled in the toolkit cross categories and definitions: System collaboration can be innovative, and it can result in system reform as it uses new ways to spend available money. And not all of them meet criteria for what youth development experts consider “best practices.” In fact, many are known in the field for their struggles and challenges. Some of them do not address employment per se, but rather speak to initiatives that promote broad-based system reform. The rationale for their inclusion is to demonstrate how those initiatives

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POLICY PROFILES

- Innovative approaches
- Funding allocations and resource development
- System collaboration
- System flexibility and reform
- Youth development

POLICY PROFILES

Innovative Approaches

Florida Business Partners for Juvenile Justice Inc., Tallahassee, Florida, prevention to aftercare for at-risk youth and juvenile offenders

ExplorNet and North Carolina Office of Juvenile Justice, Raleigh, North Carolina, computer repair training for incarcerated youth

Juvenile Justice Accountability Board, Tallahassee, Florida, outcomes evaluation for youth in commitment facilities

Jobs for Maine's Graduates, Farmingdale, Maine, career development for incarcerated youth

Oregon Market-Demand-Driven Programming, Eugene, Oregon, labor-market-based transitional programming for incarcerated youth

Funding Allocations and Resource Development

TANF Funds for Juvenile Probation, Sacramento, California, funding for welfare prevention for youth on probation

Occupational Therapy Training Program, San Francisco, California, assessment and training in alternative schools

Juvenile Welfare Board, Pinellas County, Florida, special taxing district to fund youth and family programs

Job Readiness/Work Experience Program, Jefferson City, Missouri, job-training placement for youthful offenders

Use of OJJDP Formula Funds, Minnesota
Community Reintegration, St. Paul, Minnesota, grantmaking for jobs programs serving at-risk youth and juvenile offenders

System Collaboration

Comprehensive Strategy for Youth, Family and Community, San Diego County, California, prevention through aftercare for at-risk youth and juvenile offenders

JustWork, Omaha, Nebraska, experiential training for low- to moderate-risk youth

Job Corps Agreement, Rensselaer, New York, enrollment of juvenile offenders in the Job Corps

Division of Civilian Conservation, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Columbus, Ohio, transitional programming for juvenile ex-offenders

SafeFutures, Contra Costa, Martinez, California, residential to aftercare programming for gang members

Youth Industries Program, Columbia, South Carolina, restorative justice and trade training for incarcerated youth

System Flexibility and Reform

RECLAIM Ohio, Columbus, Ohio, redistribution of funds for alternative sentencing

Neighborhood Conference Committees, Austin, Texas, informal resolution of minor legal problems

Youth Development

Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development, Des Moines, Iowa, coordination and alignment of the state's youth policies and programs

overcome barriers, confront controversy, and improve their operations. The policy profiles demonstrate how systems improve their services, and that goes beyond simply assessing where the best employment programs are found.

In addition to their approaches, policies also can be understood by their genesis. Most of the initiatives were created one of three ways: by state legislation in response to a focusing event (often a crisis that captured public attention, prompted outrage, and resulted in demand for change); as partnerships based on the work of a policy community or a “policy entrepreneur,” who spearheaded the idea; or as innovative approaches and creative uses of funding to meet a perceived community need. Knowing how to initiate major system change or push for legislation is just the first step, following through with a common language, creating partnerships as needed (even among the reluctant), and securing funding were major challenges to most of the agencies involved.

Innovative Approaches

New approaches to combating crime and promoting self-sufficiency can originate at any point and from anyone. In fact, they are more likely to come from someone with a vision—a policy entrepreneur—or as a way to meet a perceived need than they are to originate in traditional

policy arenas. Often, a need is identified by a few creative thinkers who turn research or ideas into action.

Labor markets are regional and local. Although it is easy to see that the economy has shifted from industrial to informational, specific employment opportunities depend on the local and regional economy. Market-demand-driven programming in Oregon allows the juvenile justice system to use current labor market information for vocational planning. The University of Oregon and Oregon’s workforce development system use labor market predictions to guide program development for young people in the juvenile justice system. This process assists transition specialists who work with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation developing appropriate job-training programs and finding jobs for juvenile ex-offenders returning home. Information comes from many places, most notably from the business community, whose members also weigh in on the specific training they want to see in the workforce. And because the program is set up to work with one young person at a time, unique interests, needs, and abilities can be put to the best use in the workforce.

When program development is guided by local labor markets it’s a simpler matter to match supply with demand. The initiators of the Oregon effort understood

that geographic mismatches are common. It's bad policy to return ex-offenders to communities where the jobs for which they are trained do not exist.

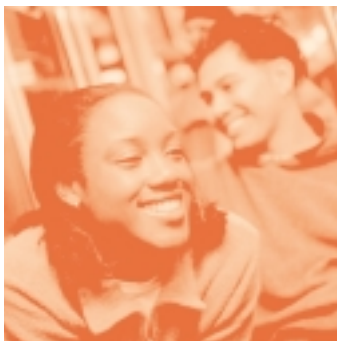
Funding Allocations and Resource Development

Where there is interest in starting a new program or affecting public policy there will be the question of funding. Any number of systems and agencies are developing creative partnerships and avenues to tap into funding streams that have not often been used to support juvenile justice programming.

A California program uses federal TANF funds (TANF is the successor to AFDC, Aid to Families with Dependent Children) to keep juvenile offenders and at-risk youth off welfare. Many states have accumulated large TANF surpluses because of mandatory reductions in welfare caseloads.

That money can be used for a wide array of services for low-income youth, including those in families who do not receive cash assistance. The state's Comprehensive Youth Services Act authorizes county juvenile probation departments to use the money for prevention programs. The Department of Social Services provides block grants to county juvenile probation departments. Each department determines which local prevention and intervention programs it wants to support.

In one case, San Francisco's juvenile probation department issued a request for proposals so that community agencies could apply under a number of funding categories, including family-focused and youth employment programs. One group that answered the call was the city's Occupational Therapy Training Program, which serves students in alternative secondary schools.



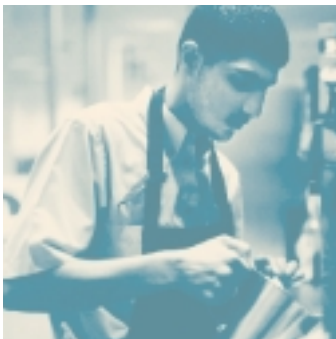
Creating effective legislation is one step to making the best use of the money available. If that can be combined with flexible RFPs that allow communities to provide high-quality services, funded agencies can sustain their efforts, even when funding streams are outside the traditional juvenile justice system.

System Collaboration

The next step after formulating a policy is implementing it. The simple problems of systems not connecting or practitioners not understanding one another can erect barriers to collaboration between the juvenile justice and workforce development systems. And collaboration does not always work: Some partnerships never seem to evolve into productive initiatives.

There are places, however, where a shared vision is being pursued successfully and where systems converge. Some common themes can be drawn from the experiences of these initiatives: The larger the number of players, the more attention the collaboration receives. The increased scrutiny often leads to more partnerships, more funding, or more recognition from other states or agencies. The best news is that, where there are fewer barriers to system collaboration, more court-involved youth can be served outside of crowded institutions.

The three most common reasons for success are deceptively simple. First, the need for funding is an excellent incentive. Even among well-funded state systems, needs arise that encourage collaboration to allocate money differently or to work around bureaucracies or other barriers. Budget



development is generally an annual event that calls for constant evaluation and reappraisal. Agencies that demonstrate continuous innovation and that react to new public priorities more readily justify budgetary demands than do those that appear resistant to change.

Second, and perhaps more important, are common vision and shared language. The partnerships that make time for discussion and exert the effort to educate one another form effective working relationships and generally maintain efficient joint operations.

Finally, partnerships that either avoid or confront territorialism often surpass initial barriers and build healthy collaborations. This is not always easy, and it requires a significant investment of time and energy. Staff turnover often is initially high in these situations, but partnerships that refuse to give up can ultimately form sustainable efforts.

JustWork is a joint program of the Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation Department and the Office of Juvenile Services, which is in the state's department of Health and Human Services. It offers experiential employment training to Omaha-area young people, ages 14–19, who are involved in the juvenile justice system. Before this initiative, the Vocational Rehabilitation Department had not

worked with court-involved youth; its focus had been on serving adults with disabilities. Its mandate fits easily with the program, however, because so many court-involved young people also have been diagnosed with learning disabilities. To promote communication and cooperation, staff from both agencies were assigned to the same location.

Finding unlikely partners paid off for JustWork's efforts with young people who might be passed over for employment because of their disabilities. The partnership worked in part because each group was willing to learn the language of the other system. Rather than seeing a barrier in the Vocational Rehabilitation system's traditional focus on adults, the agencies formed a partnership outside traditional territories. The practical results are found in reduced numbers of young people held in training schools and crowded juvenile institutions.

System Flexibility and Reform

Systemic change also results from deliberate action. Juvenile justice policies usually fall into the category of regulation—policies aimed at altering or controlling the behavior of individuals or groups. Policy initiatives sometimes step outside the usual methods of criminal justice—notably incarceration—to focus instead on programmatic or systemwide changes that support positive workforce

development approaches. Ultimately, those reform efforts have the same goal as any other juvenile justice policy: to reduce recidivism.

One often-intractable barrier to system reform is the uneven distribution of juvenile justice budgets in favor of residential facilities. By providing alternatives to commitment, RECLAIM (Reasoned and Equitable Community and Local Alternatives to the Incarceration of Minors) Ohio reduces overcrowding in the state's juvenile corrections institutions, gives local officials more discretion in the allocation of scarce juvenile justice dollars, and allows judges to impose sentences that fit the needs of the community and the offender. It also gives judges the authority to purchase state commitment for offenders who require residential placement or secure confinement. During its first year, RECLAIM Ohio provided juvenile court judges with just under \$18 million to serve more than 8600 young people in community programs. The number of institutional commitments dropped, despite an increase in the number of felony adjudications.

Youth Development

Youth development initiatives build on a range of competencies that complement young people's connections to their communities. Although employment issues are important for young people in their teens and early

twenties, youth development can be viewed as a continuous process that promotes and strengthens the entire person. It involves young people and adults in schools, families, communities, and even the juvenile justice system. Many policy initiatives are geared toward vocational training or employment, but those that build human and social capital are highlighted as youth development initiatives.

Unlike systemic reform initiatives, youth development projects can be implemented without any type of formal policy, and those projects often serve more than court-involved youth. Although the projects can result from funding opportunities, as seen in the system collaboration initiatives, one factor for success is a shared vision. Youth development encompasses a philosophy that spills over into numerous systems that serve young people, no matter what the ultimate goal is of each. Such an approach allows for instant collaboration at the implementation level.

The Youth Development State Collaboration project, originally a demonstration in a few communities in Iowa, now extends statewide. The effort began when a group of service providers learned about a federal grant program to overcome the fragmentation that had ruled individual systems. More than 30 partners convened, all with different missions, to agree on one objective: youth development.

The Iowa collaboration is working to replace the state's splintered, deficit-driven youth policies and programs with a coordinated youth development approach and to build the capacity of local communities to provide

high-quality youth services. The Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning coordinates the project, but the effort involves many Iowa state agencies, local service providers, and young people themselves.

Forming a common mission, in this case youth development, helps to secure funding. When broad-scale collaborations are the goal, the challenge is to contend with multiple partners and agencies and the corresponding competing interests. Iowa's initiative is still fairly new, but its partners have made rapid progress in shaping a shared vision. One way was to develop common definitions that apply across systems. Those from the workforce development system are learning juvenile justice terminology in Iowa, and the juvenile service providers are acquiring knowledge of the workforce development system.

WHAT TO DO

- Find a common vision and language
- Form partnerships
- Look for nontraditional funding
- Seek or create broad RFPs
- Avoid the status quo
- Avoid territorialism
- Overcome barriers
- Encourage policy entrepreneurs
- Use data
- Address geographic mismatch
- Learn from events
- Expect unintended consequences

PRACTICE MAKES POLICY

The juvenile justice system historically has been relatively inflexible and thus at odds with youth development principles. The goal in developing the policy profiles section of the toolkit was to find places where the juvenile justice system acts outside the status quo and where flexibility and positive youth development were primary objectives. Although each initiative is not designated in

whole as a “best practice,” each is working on some piece of the puzzle to improve services for court-involved youth.

For the better part, the initiatives had in common the willingness to look past existing barriers and get started. The 19 policies show that the juvenile justice system and its decision makers can be flexible. They encouraged partnerships, innovation, and ideas promoting youth development, although the successful initiatives were not always motivated by the policymakers themselves. Often, a juvenile justice or workforce development official, or even a business leader, overcame existing bureaucratic challenges to influence policy decisions. Hard work and patience, as in any field, pay off.

Find a Common Vision and Language

One theme that emerged among the collaborative efforts was the need for a common goal and language base. Some collaborators regretted not opening those discussions early in the process. The absence of a common language led to high staff turnover, and there were substantial delays before the programs became effective. Although juvenile justice and workforce development systems generally do not share programmatic goals, when they collaborate, it is with one objective: to change the behavior of the individual (increase employment attainment and upward mobility

and reduce recidivism). Thus, the behavior and the population must be addressed first and then all systems or partnering agencies will need to cooperate to adopt the common goal, in this case, youth development.

Form Partnerships

Anticipate what each partner can bring to the table. The resources needed for an effective program, from money to staffing to materials and supplies, are often distributed across a variety of public and private agencies. Those partners want evidence that trading their resources will produce not only policy-related results, but some worthwhile outcomes for the agency, such as public recognition or access to resources in the future.

If you are not a policy entrepreneur, you or your agency can join a policy community that is interested in effecting change. Look to other systems for ideas and join the effort.

Look for Nontraditional Funding

Funding can come from many places: federal, local, or state government; foundations; businesses; associations. Gaining knowledge of systems (juvenile justice or workforce development, among others), making connections with potential partners, and nonstop networking outside your own circles are good avenues to new funding.

Seek or Create Broad RFPs

RFPs aimed at promoting self-sufficiency can have the unintended consequence of placing undue burdens on the funded agencies. What is evident from both the program and the policy profiles sections of the toolkit is that a broad range of services is needed to integrate young people into the workforce. Whether those services are delivered through partnerships or by a single entity, delivery still takes considerable planning and appropriate resources. Increased services also can lead to a widened net that places more burdens on participants. That factor must be considered.

Avoid the Status Quo

Long-term success comes from allowing for flexibility, learning from other systems and partners, and being willing to change. As a part of the process, your agency will need to be willing to educate others about your approaches. It is possible to mistake processes for goals, and people can believe they have a stake in processes even if those processes do not most effectively meet the goals of the broader policy.

Avoid Territorialism

This might be easier said than done, but before proceeding, take the time to determine where everyone stands. Realize that control of resources is crucial to organizational survival and that progress might be more rapid if respect is shown for the core resources of all organizations involved. Businesses guard financial resources; government agencies guard political resources; foundations, advocacy groups, and nonprofits guard legitimacy and reputation.

Overcome Barriers

All 19 initiatives faced challenges that could easily have put an end to initial partnerships or continued operations. Judges sentence youth to incarceration, partners become territorial, or funding is lacking. These are challenges to promoting positive workforce development, but each initiative found creative ways to address them.

Encourage Policy Entrepreneurs

Some of the most effective and innovative approaches begin with one person developing an idea and running with it. If you are a policy entrepreneur, enlist the support of partners with similar visions, even if they work in

different systems. If a policy entrepreneur approaches you, be open to the possibilities, even as you maintain a realistic appreciation of what is possible. Sometimes the most unlikely partnerships can be the most productive.

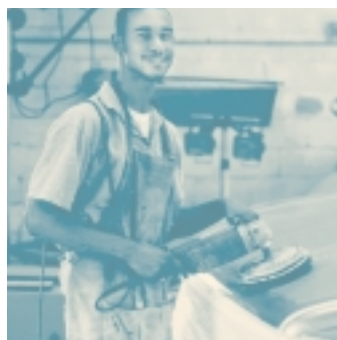
Use Data

Your agency or partnership might not be able to afford an independent evaluator, but you still need to show proof of effectiveness, and without data, your chances of increased or continued funding could be compromised. Identify concrete, measurable, and realistic indicators of success and monitor them. When successful outcomes occur, profile them to the media, and provide concrete examples of your success.

Data are also important for planning your innovative approach or effective initiative. Agencies reported over and over again that their success was largely attributable to efforts early on to match the goal with data or needs assessments. This could include matching labor market needs with employment training or conducting needs assessments to verify that a proposed initiative will be useful in a given location.

Address Geographic Mismatch

Geographic mismatch is a common problem: Young offenders might live in one area, but find work in another. Being released from a facility far from home can confound the process of enrolling in school or getting a job. It is important to consider the local labor market and find



partner agencies to fill gaps in implementation. Agencies that provide transportation, for example, can help young people find jobs outside a neighborhood with few opportunities.

Policymakers should recognize that an employment program in one area of the country might not work in another. Forming partnerships with the workforce development system and the private sector to integrate programming with employment forecasts and to secure training resources, curricula, and other needed training materials is essential to programs that look beyond the youthful offender's time in the system.

Learn from Events

Unfortunately, there will always be focusing events related to crime. High-profile murders, gang violence, and notorious incidents inside juvenile institutions bring close and sometimes unfair media scrutiny. In almost every social policy field, focusing events lead to policy changes—witness gun control legislation in the wake of the Columbine High School shootings. Many juvenile justice initiatives result from events or trends that capture public attention. They are part of public policy, however, and they should be used as learning tools. Not making a change in the face of a negative event can be irresponsible. Changing a system to better help young people is a positive response.

Expect Unintended Consequences

Every agency responded that unintended consequences were inevitable. Those challenges, however, generally were confronted immediately. A common situation involved new services, which often have new requirements. For example, a new program might require participants to find jobs within a specified period or return to jail. The intent is laudable, but the reincarceration would not occur if the new policy were not in place. When such concerns present themselves, policymakers must be ready to confront the system again and address the unintended consequence.

Unintended consequences also can be positive. ExplorNet's original intent was to connect the public school system to the Internet. The unintended result was a new and highly successful employment initiative for incarcerated youth.

call to action

The American juvenile justice system has undergone major reform in recent years, in part because of high-profile violent crimes perpetrated by children and the public perception that the system, as currently configured, cannot prevent these events, hold young people accountable for their actions, or rehabilitate offenders. Despite reform and the erosion of its original mission, the system continues to be plagued by high rates of recidivism and a lack of public confidence.

Overall, the system has not been able to alter the trajectories of troubled young people or prepare them to assume productive adult roles. The combination of confinement, supervision, surveillance, and treatment commonly prescribed for young offenders has not achieved the desired results. Nevertheless, many states continue to increase spending on juvenile corrections, with poor results.

State and local policymakers and the juvenile justice system should take a closer look at promising initiatives for juvenile offenders that combine the principles of youth development and workforce development. The traditional approaches to academic and vocational education, anchored in the industrial age, should be abandoned. The juvenile justice system needs to more broadly adapt practices and policies that reflect what has been learned from the youth development and workforce development fields. The young people who find themselves tangled in the juvenile justice system must be given the same opportunities to establish nurturing relationships with adults; be buoyed by positive peer support; assume leadership roles; contribute to the well-being of their communities; and develop academic, vocational, and work readiness skills and competencies that are available to young people who have not been similarly disadvantaged.

Moreover, the many public systems charged with serving their needs must more effectively collaborate and share resources and expertise to realize shared and individual goals. No system can do it alone. Public systems must reach out to the private sector—business, civic organizations, religious institutions, and foundations—to gain assistance, guidance, and support.

As a nation, we cannot continue to cast off such large segments of our population and commit them to the margins of our society. The United States recently experienced a period of unprecedented prosperity in which employers sought workers in new and different places. Now, as the economy contracts, there is a different challenge of ensuring that court-involved youth can gain a strong foothold in the workplace. We have an opportunity to invest in the development of these young people, impart the skills and competencies demanded by the new economy, and connect them to a fluctuating labor market. All that remains is to get to work.

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ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. It was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of United Parcel Service, and his siblings, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and neighborhoods fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs. For more information, visit the Foundation's website, www.aecf.org.



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BARRIERS AND PROMISING APPROACHES TO WORKFORCE AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT for YOUNG OFFENDERS

toolkit

Report to the Annie E. Casey
Foundation by the National
Youth Employment Coalition,
the Justice Policy Institute,
and the Youth Development
and Research Fund

Barriers and Promising
Approaches to
Workforce and Youth
Development for
Young Offenders

POLICY PROFILES



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introduction

In 1997, the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the U.S. Department of Justice sponsored a task force to study ways of meeting the employment and training needs of young people who had been in trouble with the law. The task force was convened by the Home Builders Institute, which was searching for ways to enhance vocational preparation, reduce youth crime and recidivism, and improve the prospects for court-involved youth in the labor market.¹

In 1999, the Annie E. Casey Foundation asked the National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC), in cooperation with the Youth Development and Research Fund (YDRF) and the Justice Policy Institute (JPI), to build on the task force's work. The Foundation wanted to identify what works: exemplary programs and policy initiatives that help court-involved youth become economically self-sufficient.

The question of whether employment and training programs are the solution to the problems that confront the juvenile justice system is a legitimate one. For a good portion of the past two decades youth crime and juvenile justice have been subjected to sustained attention and study. The issues matter to policymakers, juvenile justice workers, politicians, and parents, and they matter to the young people themselves.

The national study undertaken by NYEC, JPI, and YDRF had three objectives:

- Identify barriers to reform of the juvenile justice system and review the literature on youth employment, workforce development, and juvenile justice.

- Survey and synthesize information about innovative state and local policy initiatives that promote effective programming.
- Examine exemplary youth employment and development programs that explicitly serve juvenile offenders.

The resulting three-part toolkit examines the systemic barriers to achieving economic self-sufficiency for court-involved youth; it identifies creative approaches to overcoming those barriers; and it details how communities, stakeholders, and practitioners can more effectively prepare young people involved in the juvenile justice system for self-sufficiency and productive citizenship. The overview outlines some of the problems and identifies some of the avenues to their solution, and this portion highlights 19 exemplary policy initiatives.

The 15 exemplary programs highlighted elsewhere in the toolkit are the efforts of the entrepreneurial, the committed, the creative, and the determined to find and implement ways to rescue juvenile offenders and at-risk youth—often despite public policy. All too often, these innovators assert, public policy is a major barrier to, rather than an enabler of, good programming. Until public policy promotes collaborative, comprehensive, innovative programs, there will be no attaining the goal of reaching the largest possible number of young offenders. If we are to move beyond islands of excellence in seas of mediocrity, public policy must acknowledge, advance, build, and sustain environments that promote effective practice.

The 19 policies profiled here fall into several categories: innovative approaches, new ways to allocate funds and develop resources, ways to promote collaboration among various groups, ways

to promote system flexibility or system reform, and one policy initiative that can be viewed more strictly as youth development. Most of the policies cross categories and definitions.

Not all of the policy initiatives meet criteria for what youth development experts consider “best practices.” In fact, many are known in the field for their struggles and challenges. Those that do not address employment per se, but rather promote broad-based system reform, are included because they overcame barriers, confronted controversy, or improved operations. They demonstrate how systems can improve services, and that goes beyond simply assessing where the best employment programs are found.

Public policies also can be understood by their genesis. Most of the initiatives highlighted here were created one of three ways: by state legislation in response to a focusing event (often a crisis that captured public attention, prompted outrage, and resulted in demand for change); as partnerships based on the work of a policy community or a “policy entrepreneur,” who spearheaded the idea; or as innovative approaches and creative uses of funding to meet a perceived community need. Knowing how to engineer major system change or push for legislation is just the first step. Following through by developing a common language, creating partnerships as needed (even among the reluctant), and securing funding were major challenges most of the agencies involved faced and, often, surmounted.

METHODOLOGY

The selection of highlighted policies was based on an examination of descriptive information and qualitative data that reveal the details of specific conditions associated with each policy.

NYEC used telephone interviews to develop an illustrative case study that provided examples of promising strategies.

The sampling method had two parts. First, national experts in the juvenile justice and workforce development systems, including policymakers, researchers, and representatives from national organizations, were contacted by telephone and through a mail survey of members of the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators.

Respondents were asked structured survey questions about funding, outcome measures, and other basic information for policy initiatives they believed had promise. NYEC compared the respondents' suggestions with the overall criteria set forth by NYEC and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. A group of promising policies was chosen, and a second, in-depth telephone survey was conducted of the policymakers and initiative administrators who were instrumental in developing or implementing them.

That survey focused on five key areas: collaboration among systems or between systems and the private sector; policy and system flexibility; youth development; innovative approaches; and funding, support, and replication. The 19 policy initiatives are detailed here. The other parts of the toolkit highlight exemplary programs and give an overview of the field of workforce and youth development for court-involved youth.

NOTE

¹Task Force on Employment Training for Court-Involved Youth. *Employment Training for Court-Involved Youth*. Washington, D.C.: U.S Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, November 2000. Online: www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/ojjdpreport_11_2000/index.html.

FLORIDA BUSINESS PARTNERS FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE INC.

OVERVIEW

Conventional wisdom holds that business leaders don't like to get involved in social programs, but Florida Business Partners for Juvenile Justice Inc. (originally Business Partners for Prevention), was established by a group that believed a public-private partnership could help combat juvenile delinquency. The group approached Gov. Lawton Chiles with its plan, and in 1994, the secretary of the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) announced a joint effort involving DJJ, the Florida Chamber of Commerce, the Florida Retail Federation, the Florida Council of 100, the governor's office, and business groups that had expressed interest in participating in juvenile justice issues at the state level. The group assists DJJ in developing business partnerships.

During the 1999 Florida legislative session, a direct-support organization for the DJJ was established by statute. In January 2000, the organization was incorporated with a new name, and in August 2001 it was granted a federal tax exemption.

The group's mission is to maximize business involvement in community-based juvenile justice programs. It works to encourage local business partnerships; to sponsor, promote, and support programs and services for at-risk young people and for those already involved with the juvenile justice system; and to recognize the contributions of businesses that work in partnership with DJJ and its provider agencies.

The programs include mentoring, job training and placement, apprenticeships, recreation, and family assistance. Each partnership tailors its objectives to the needs, abilities, and concerns of the businesses involved and the communities served. Generally, this means helping businesses become involved and explaining how to set up job-training, school-to-work, job placement, and apprenticeship programs. The organization also provides technical assistance to youth programs on business recruitment.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

Florida's business leaders agreed on these principles: They must collaborate with the public sector, they can offer help and resources for the prevention of juvenile crime, they can support existing solutions.

An early objective was the establishment of a panel of business executives who could offer advice about issues faced by DJJ. Two representatives from each founding-member business serve on the panel. The panel provides oversight of Business Partners projects:

- The development of an implementation manual to assist local chambers of commerce in securing local business involvement in existing delinquency prevention and intervention programs.
- Assistance to local chambers of commerce in coordinating involvement in prevention programs.

case example: **innovative approaches** system point–target population:
prevention to aftercare for at-risk youth and juvenile offenders ■ contact: Sandra Roach, Senior
Management Analyst II, Prevention and Victim Services ■ Florida Business Partners for Juvenile
Justice Inc., Florida Department of Juvenile Justice ■ 2737 Centerview Drive ■ Tallahassee, FL
32399 ■ 850-488-3302, 850-922-6189 ■ www.djj.state.fl.us ■ Sandra.roach@djj.state.fl.us

- The creation of the Governor’s Community Investment Awards, which give annual recognition to large and small businesses involved in delinquency prevention.
- The development and provision of coordinated training for business participants, local chamber staff, and DJJ staff.

Any interested business owner or employee may join the effort. The key is to organize people who will serve as its driving force. Potential leaders can be found among local chamber leaders and among business representatives who serve on county juvenile justice councils or district juvenile justice boards. Ideally, local Business Partners coordinate their efforts with local governments. The activities, goals, or action plans incorporate local needs and are developed through informal goal-setting programs or through formal asset inventories in the business community.

Business Partners identify assets within local businesses to match with community juvenile justice programs. Particular emphasis is given to improving the workforce development and employment prospects for juvenile offenders as well as for young people at risk of delinquency. The business community can offer direct incentives for youth involvement: everything from offering job placement and career counseling, to mentoring and shadowing programs, to scholarships and internships, to financial and

material donations. Business Partners also encourage their employees to become involved by offering release time for community volunteering, coordinating volunteer job banks, and formally recognizing outstanding service to the community.

ISSUES TO ADDRESS

Although the originators of the Florida Business Partners initiative were enthusiastic, it has sometimes been difficult to expand the effort. Where is the common ground between social work and profit making? On a practical level, business people require task-oriented projects that can be accomplished efficiently. The current focus for the Florida Business Partners for Juvenile Justice is to encourage business involvement and participation in local communities and to identify areas where businesses can volunteer and contribute to reducing juvenile crime. Additional goals are to promote the development of the workforce by helping local businesses and communities foster positive youth development and job readiness as an alternative to a life of criminal behavior.

EXPLORNET AND NORTH CAROLINA OFFICE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

OVERVIEW

When Gov. Jim Hunt signed the Juvenile Justice Reform Act in October 1998, he challenged the state Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) to reach young people early and keep them on the right track. OJJ and its training schools across the state formed the Technology Learning Program in partnership with ExplorNet, a Raleigh-based nonprofit organization, to train young people to refurbish and install computers in the OJJ schools. That initiative is called the ExplorNet Technology Learning Program.

ExplorNet is best known for bringing technology to North Carolina's public school system. The program provides tools that take a school district from the basics of cabling through community and economic development. ExplorNet uses a series of programs to help schools integrate technology into the classroom. Communities can then use the growing technology capabilities of their young people to promote economic development. Because of its success in the public schools, the Office of Juvenile Justice decided to incorporate ExplorNet into OJJ's correctional facilities.

Students in the program are offered two classes, Computer Engineering Technology 1 and 2, which follow industry guidelines for A+ computer engineer certification. OJJ expects the program will extend to other juvenile facilities. Coursework includes classroom instruction, internships, apprenticeships, and job shadowing.

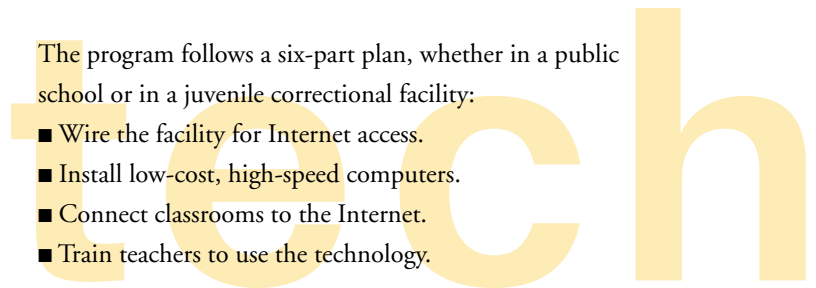
INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

The effort was inspired by the state's NetDay projects, which in 1996 had 16,000 volunteers install 3.8 million feet of high-speed data wire in 11,480 public-school classrooms, saving taxpayers an estimated \$22 million.

The ExplorNet Technology Learning Program uses public-private partnerships to coordinate resources from government, businesses, and individuals. Used computers are donated to the project by businesses. Students in the Workforce Development program are trained with a curriculum developed by ExplorNet and the state's Department of Public Instruction to refurbish and install the high-speed machines in public schools and state juvenile facilities. OJJ benefits from ExplorNet's statewide network of volunteers from business and industry and from ExplorNet's collaboration with the North Carolina Electronics and Information Technologies Association, which encourages support from information technology companies in the form of guest lectures, hardware and software donations, technical advice, and student internships.

The program follows a six-part plan, whether in a public school or in a juvenile correctional facility:

- Wire the facility for Internet access.
- Install low-cost, high-speed computers.
- Connect classrooms to the Internet.
- Train teachers to use the technology.



case example: **innovative approaches** system point–target population:
youth incarcerated in training schools ■ contact: Pamela S. Davis ■ North Carolina Office of
Juvenile Justice, Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention ■ 1801 Mail Service
Center ■ Raleigh, NC 27699 ■ 919-733-3388, 919-733-0780 fax ■ www.juvjus.state.nc.us
■ pamela.davis@ncmail.net

- Develop curricula that incorporate Internet use.
- Evaluate the program's effectiveness.

CHALLENGES OVERCOME

One concern for OJJ was the possible negative reaction from teachers. The project means additional work for them, the introduction of volunteer instructors, and the need for teachers to work side-by-side with students in wiring the schools. Fears were soon assuaged when it became clear that the teachers were as excited about the initiative as the students were.

Another potential barrier that plagues any agency whose goal is public safety is allowing youth to leave facilities for training, education, or work. OJJ's flexible approach allows students who do not pose a risk to the community to work or train outside the corrections system at jobs or as apprentices.

ISSUES TO ADDRESS

OJJ perceives that three issues must be addressed: First, hardware and upgrades are expensive, and ExplorNet does not have the means to donate enough to meet demand. This leads to the second issue, which is the need for more business involvement. Although many volunteer instructors have lent a hand, many other potential volunteers and donors are not interested in helping "bad" kids—even when a program serves useful social purposes. ExplorNet has worked with many businesses to support public-school

projects, but those partnership linkages have not always carried over to the juvenile justice system. Additionally, OJJ is finding it difficult to persuade some of those who are associated with the project to serve on workforce boards or to hire Workforce Development participants.

JUVENILE JUSTICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

OVERVIEW

In 1994 the Florida Legislature created the Juvenile Justice Accountability Board (JJAB) and charged it with two broad mandates: Measure, evaluate, and report on the outcomes of youth referred to the Department of Juvenile Justice and assess the degree to which the policies and practices of each unit of the executive and judicial branches of government support legislative policy for the juvenile justice system. A sunset provision in the enabling legislation disbanded the board in June 2001. The text of the 1998 supplemental legislation is available online: www.aecf.org/publications/index.htm#youth. JJAB's research and publications continue to guide juvenile justice policy in Florida.

Research done by JJAB and other organizations created a substantial body of data, analyses, and recommendations to support the development of public policy. Policymakers want and need a practical framework within which information can be used to make judgments about the effectiveness of programs and related budgetary decisions.

JJAB was a developer of reliable information and analysis to support annual decision making by the secretary of the Department of Juvenile Justice, the governor, the Legislature, and others. Providing the leadership for the development of a strategic vision for Florida's juvenile justice system is a critical task, and JJAB's vision was based on a broad consensus among the very diverse stakeholders who

make up the system. It was used to drive the outcomes expected for youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system.

JJAB supported public safety through informing policy choices and strategies for the prevention of juvenile crime and delinquency. It was guided by a commitment to formulate policy and funding recommendations based on reliable and valid data, independent analysis, and sound evaluation. Its mandate was to obtain input from all stakeholders; encourage open debate on issues; and facilitate the development of a juvenile justice system that effectively reduces juvenile crime, is responsible to stakeholders, encourages interagency collaboration, and sustains public confidence and support. Each goal influenced—and in turn was influenced by—the others in a dynamic annual cycle.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

The board carried out its activities inclusively, encouraging the participation of others. Board members believed in continuously forming and nurturing partnerships with DJJ, providers, juvenile justice district boards, county councils, and other stakeholder groups that make up the juvenile justice system.

One stellar example was in the JJAB approach to research on evaluating outcomes. Rather than perform all research internally, the board signed research contracts with university

case example: **innovative approaches** system point–target population:
youth in commitment facilities ■ contact: Lynn Groves ■ Florida Department of Juvenile Justice
■ 2737 Centerview Drive ■ Tallahassee, FL 32399 ■ 850-922-4377, 850-922-4101 fax ■
www.djj.state.fl.us/jjab/index.html ■ Lynn.groves@djj.state.fl.us

faculty in the fields of criminology, sociology, criminal justice, and the law. In 1998, board-sponsored research projects were done at the University of Florida and the University of Central Florida. JJAB also worked with the Florida Inter-University Consortium for Child, Family and Community Studies, which consists of a half-dozen public and private universities.

JJAB established a participatory evaluation process in which a wide circle of stakeholders was given the opportunity for input into the design of a credible and effective outcome evaluation system. The following principles guided the board's actions:

- Stakeholders in the juvenile justice system at the local level can and should make valuable contributions to the design of the evaluation process.
- Stakeholder participation in the evaluation design will enhance the credibility and usefulness of evaluation studies.
- Stakeholders need objective information about how programs in their own communities are performing.
- Continuous improvement in the performance of the juvenile justice system depends on a willingness by policymakers at the community and state level to use the results of outcome evaluation studies, as well as other

types of research, to inform future policy and funding decisions.

One JJAB study of vocational and work programs for youth in juvenile justice facilities analyzed effective work programs nationwide, examined relevant research on what makes programs effective, examined the status of vocational and work programs in Florida, and made recommendations for expanding and improving Florida's programs. The study showed that Florida takes employment and self-sufficiency for youth seriously.

As with most board projects, the study on vocational and work programs led to publication of two reports. The first, a technical research report, includes a literature review, findings, and recommendations. The other is a summary designed specifically for policymakers, DJJ leadership and staff, providers, local boards and councils, and others who either would have specific use for the report's information or the ability to act on its recommendations. The reports are available online: www.djj.state.fl.us/jjab/index.html.

JOBS FOR MAINE'S GRADUATES

OVERVIEW

Jobs for Maine's Graduates (JMG) is a statewide, private, nonprofit program established by the Maine Legislature in 1993. JMG is based on the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program model, the core elements of which have been adapted to serve incarcerated young people in Maine.

All JMG students participate in the Career Association, a highly motivational youth organization similar to Junior Achievement. Job specialists trained by JMG specifically for the program work with 35–40 students each in classes of 10–15. Each student receives basic academic testing, and remedial studies and tutoring are provided as needed. Students develop graduation and career plans, often supported by career counseling and job shadowing. Career Association activities include visits from guest speakers, field trips, and awards and recognition for academic and job skill achievement.

JMG's academic programs are offered in a year-long, one-credit course, often in conjunction with the business or vocational education departments of the host school, and the full-time job specialists teach as host-school guests. Host schools work with young people whose lives often are marked by a combination of risk factors: Many come from single-parent, low-income families and they exhibit below average academic achievement, basic-skill weaknesses, and limited work experience. Many also have already been involved with the juvenile justice system.

The program consists of more than 120 hours' instruction, much of it in applied-learning activities. Coursework includes employment-based competencies, membership in the Career Association, community service, and academic supports.

JMG extends outward from school too, using local industry and other community resources to introduce career choices, job expectations, the importance of education, and life after school.

JMG's costs are about \$1200 per student for 12–18 months of enrollment. And each graduating class essentially pays its way in income taxes during its first year in the workforce. Additional indirect benefits accrue to the taxpayer in the form of revenues not spent on social interventions.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

JMG is where government, business, labor, education, and community leaders come together to help incarcerated youth overcome barriers to high school graduation and employment. Public- and private-sector representatives are involved in all aspects of the JMG program: in service on the Board of Directors, in the classroom as guest speakers, and at the jobsite providing shadow experiences and hiring JMG graduates. JMG's private-sector sponsorship is flourishing: Business donations support essential student enrichment programs, local sites, and new-model development.

case example: **innovative approaches** system point–target population:
incarcerated youth ■ contact: Pete Thibodeau, President, Jobs for Maine’s Graduates ■
209 Maine Avenue ■ Farmingdale, ME 04344 ■ 207-582-0924, 207-582-0938 fax ■
jmg_pete@gwi.net ■ www.jmg.org

JMG currently has four successful program models, and more are being developed.

Project Reach is an intervention and transition program for 7th and 8th graders, with a 9th-grade follow-up. Year-round activities keep students positively engaged with school. The Opportunity Awareness Program is a year-round drop-out prevention program for high school students that emphasizes leadership, self-development, career development, and connections with school and community. School to Work is a program for high school seniors that encourages graduation, leadership, teamwork, career exploration, job attainment, job survival, and mastery of basic employment competencies. School to Work has a 12-month follow-up after graduation. STEPS (Students Taking Educational Paths to Success) works with high school dropouts, aged 16–20. It emphasizes attainment of a diploma or finishing a GED, individual and group skills training, and employability and workplace skills.

After they identify career plans, students learn the basics of the job hunt. Appropriate workplace behavior and attitude training gives students an idea of what employers and co-workers will expect from them.

Perhaps the most important work of the JMG job specialists is advocacy: They connect their students with school and community resources, and they keep track of participants’ activities during the summer and after graduation. Job

specialists are considered personally accountable for their students’ achievement. Students must meet expectations defined by JAG and by Maine’s school-to-work efforts. Performance is assessed by Northeastern University’s Center for Labor Market Studies. JAG conducts third-party verification of results.

JMG is reaccredited regularly by JAG. In 1994–1995, JMG was identified as “the standard for both model performance and system management.” From 1995 to 1999, JMG was named by JAG as the best statewide school-to-work system in the nation. From 1998 to 2000, the JMG graduation rate was 94 percent. Ninety percent of the class of 2000 was working, in school, or in the service.

ISSUES TO ADDRESS

Maine’s correctional system serves young people and adults, and juvenile offenders are given little in the way of activities that promote self-sufficiency while they are incarcerated. JMG’s contract from the state institution is to ameliorate the lack of opportunity for those young people, who generally face multiple barriers to employment. One barrier is well-recognized and intractable: There is a collective lack of interest in hiring court-involved youth. JMG’s advocates work as intermediaries for juvenile offenders to gain entry to the workforce, but there are not enough of them to meet the need.

OREGON MARKET-DEMAND-DRIVEN PROGRAMMING

OVERVIEW

Juvenile offenders often find it difficult to find jobs once they are released from the system. One barrier is the stigma of a criminal record, but often they simply do not have the skills they need to compete in the workforce. Juvenile offenders with disabilities can have an even harder time of it. A broad-based initiative in Oregon, however, allows the juvenile justice system to use current labor market information to guide vocational planning, thus directing the training of young offenders to meet the changing needs of the labor market.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

The cooperating agencies are the state’s Vocational Rehabilitation Division, the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA), the University of Oregon, and the state Department of Education. The Department of Education’s certification standards for vocational educators now include the

recommendations of the initiative’s vocational advisory committee, whose membership consists of people who represent the industries most in need of workers. The initiative also uses data from the statistical abstracts published each year by the State Office of Employment. The result is that OYA facilities can target vocational education to the labor market.

The initiative is unusual in other ways, too. Unlike most employment programs, this one is geared toward the needs of the individual: A single vocational program cannot work for everyone. In conjunction with the effort to identify market-driven demand for labor, Project SUPPORT (Service Utilization Promoting Positive Outcomes in Rehabilitation and Transition) helps incarcerated adolescents with disabilities prepare for transition into the community. The project began as a five-region pilot in 1999 and expanded statewide in 2001. The university provided

TABLE 1. NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Community Forum Ranking	OYA Youth Ranking	Combined Ranking
Available community resources	Family supports	Support staff and mentors
Institution: education programs	Support of staff and mentors	Family supports
Transition and parole case management	Youth as support	Institution: education programs
Institution: support and treatment	Institution: treatment and support	Available community resources
Support staff and mentors	Institution: education programs	Institution: treatment and support
Independent-living programs	Positive peer support	Youth as support

case example: **innovative approaches** system point–target population:
youth in transition, facility to community ■ contact: Deanne Unruh ■ Department of Secondary Special
Education & Transition, University of Oregon ■ 175 College of Education, 5260 University of Oregon
■ Eugene, OR 97403 ■ 541-346-3585, 541-346-1411 fax ■ dkunruh@oregon.uoregon.edu

start-up training and assistance, and it continues to evaluate Project SUPPORT.

CHALLENGES OVERCOME

Although the market drives most of the decision-making processes in this initiative, the collaborating agencies planned ahead. In an effort to circumvent problems, university researchers conducted a needs assessment in several regions where the efforts were being planned. To reach the goal of developing a participant-centered, community-based program for young offenders making the transition back into the community, the agencies determined that the involvement of community members—and the young people themselves—was essential.

Seven groups of stakeholders were identified as important sources of information: incarcerated young people under OYA supervision, vocational rehabilitation staff members,

OYA parole staff, facility education staff, OYA treatment staff, members of the business community and school-to-work experts, and community service agency staff.

Interviews conducted with representatives of these groups and with OYA youth identified specific needs of juvenile offenders about to re-enter the community. The evaluators synthesized the results into six categories. Table 1 shows needs rankings that emerged from the discussions. A similar approach was taken for identifying barriers to success after incarceration (Table 2). Analysis of the information led to specific recommendations for the structure and content of the initiative: It was to facilitate self-directed planning for participants; promote systems change and collaboration with community resources; develop strategies for increasing family and peer support; and help young people continue to develop academic, independent-living, and job skills.

TABLE 2. BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT		
Community Forum Ranking	OYA Youth Ranking	Combined Ranking
Lack of independent-living skills	Negative peer association	Negative peer association
Lack of social supports	Lack of self-awareness, self-determination	Lack of self-awareness, self-determination
Lack of family support	Lack of family support	Lack of family support
Negative peer association	Lack of independent-living skills	Lack of independent-living skills
Employment–employer barriers	Drugs	Employment–employer barriers
Lack of basic academic skills	Employment–employer barriers	Drugs

TANF FUNDS FOR JUVENILE PROBATION

OVERVIEW

In 1997, the California Legislature enacted the Thompson-Maddy-Ducheny-Ashburn Welfare-to-Work Act. Earlier laws had provided for the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program, under which each county provided cash assistance and other benefits to qualified low-income families. The 1997 act gave the program a new name, California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids, or CalWorks, and it altered welfare funding and administration. The act included many new rules, including new work requirements and limits on the receipt of aid. Chapter 3.2, the Comprehensive Youth Services Act (available online: www.aecf.org/publications/index.htm#youth), allows county juvenile probation departments to use federal TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) money for programs aimed at keeping juvenile offenders off the welfare rolls.

FUNDING ALLOCATIONS AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The commitment of TANF funds to juvenile probation departments had two steps: First, the actual legislation made it possible. Then, it was necessary to form a mechanism to transfer funds from the state to local agencies. The Department of Social Services administers the funds that go to county juvenile probation departments, and most received block grants for juvenile probation prevention programs. Los Angeles received the largest amount (almost \$50 million); other jurisdictions received less. The San Francisco area allocation was just over \$3 million.

As long as federal funds are available, county probation departments can use the money to serve children who are truant, have run away, are at-risk of being wards of the court, or are already under the supervision of the juvenile probation department. Parents and families are included as well if the funding will help them build economic self-sufficiency.

The San Francisco juvenile probation department issued a request for proposals (RFP) for community agencies to apply for funding under several categories, from family-focused programs to youth employment. Two agencies applied for and received funding in the category for educational or employment-focused programs. One of them is the Occupational Therapy Training Program.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY TRAINING PROGRAM

Contact: Colleen Brennan-Devine
Ida B. Wells Alternative High School
1099 Hayes Street
San Francisco, CA 94117
415-421-6315, 415-241-6317 fax

OVERVIEW

The Special Services Group is a large United Way nonprofit agency based in Los Angeles County. Its subsidiary, the Occupational Therapy Training Program (OTTP), was established in 1975 and now has an extensive history of working with high-risk youth and their families. OTTP provides assessment and training in pre-employment, work

case example: **funding allocations and resource development** system point–target population: youth on probation ■ contact:
Jan Bezore ■ California Department of Social Services ■ 744 P Street, MS8-90 ■
Sacramento, CA 95814 ■ 916-657-1662, 916-953-1774 fax ■ jbezore@dss.ca.gov

maturity, independent living, and social skills to students in alternative high schools. Most of the young people in the program are served by the probation system. Services are provided in group and individual training sessions. OTTP helps young people make the transition from the classroom to trade school or college and provides job placement. Intensive case management is provided. OTTP staff members are occupational therapists, social workers, employment specialists, and occupational therapy interns.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

The TANF funds made it possible for the Los Angeles-based nonprofit to expand to San Francisco. OTTP's clients have had extremely successful outcomes, including improved school attendance and graduation rates, placement in and maintenance of employment, enrollment in colleges and trade school, increased self-sufficiency, decreased recidivism, and greater motivation.

OTTP incorporates its program into the school schedule so students can work toward high school diplomas. They participate in daily group sessions for a total of 120 hours of instruction, and they attend individual biweekly sessions. OTTP provides a battery of assessments to identify skills, growth areas, and occupational interests. A comprehensive, client-centered evaluation designates short- and long-term goals, which are reevaluated frequently. OTTP provides intensive counseling and collaborates with community-based agencies, including the Bridges School-to-Work Program, which works intensively with young people to

provide job placement. The Department of Rehabilitation works with students who have emotional or learning disabilities. Mental health agencies provide crisis intervention and therapy to client students and their families.

CHALLENGES OVERCOME

The director of the program conducted a needs assessment in the San Francisco area, which showed that alternative high schools lacked the services of occupational therapists and that students in those schools could benefit from OTTP's services. But obtaining funding is always the biggest challenge. When the director learned of the Department of Juvenile Probation's RFP, she applied under the education category to serve 16- to 19-year-old students at Ida B. Wells Alternative High School. All of the students had some connection to the juvenile court system. Weeding through the bureaucracy was difficult, but she was able to secure enough funding to serve 55 young people.

Expanding the program from Los Angeles to San Francisco also took effort. OTTP established networks with other community-based organizations to enhance its knowledge of services available to young people in the city. OTTP collaborates with other providers to ensure that essential services are offered to each participant.

JUVENILE WELFARE BOARD, PINELLAS COUNTY

OVERVIEW

An independent, special taxing district created by state legislation and approved by county voters funds the Juvenile Welfare Board (JWB) of Pinellas County, Florida. With its establishment in 1946, JWB became the first countywide agency to use dedicated property taxes to improve the lives of children and families. Rather than delivering services directly, JWB plans and contracts for delivery of services through programs operated by various agencies across Pinellas County. JWB currently has contracts with about 80 agencies and 180 programs to provide a broad range of services.

The authorizing legislation, as amended in 1995, is available online: www.aecf.org/publications/index.htm#youth.

The board's emphasis is on prevention and early intervention, and it focuses on positive development for children and families and on the reduction of risk for substance abuse, violence, and harmful sexual behavior. Services and activities are primarily asset and community based. Programs work mainly with children under the age of 6 and between the ages of 10 and 14, and they rely heavily on the principles of youth development.

Each year JWB provides funding for programs and services in four categories: continuing programs, new programs, equipment and renovation, and community development.

Each program is assigned to a contract manager for continuous monitoring of success and fiscal accountability. A web-based reporting system allows program participants and JWB to collect and use demographic data and information about what kinds of services are available to Pinellas County's families. JWB's agency certification program ensures that programs operate in keeping with professional standards and that they demonstrate a strong commitment to serving the community.

JWB offers training and technical assistance to direct-services agencies. It also works to advocate new legislation or changes in legislation to strengthen families and protect children, actively engages in providing and exchanging information about the needs of children and families, and strives to build a sense of community linked to support for children and families.

This commitment was affirmed with the passage of the 1990 Children's Services Referendum, which doubled JWB's taxing authority cap and permitted new programming in the areas of child care, family support and empowerment, neighborhood and community development, and youth development. JWB has 11 members, 6 of them appointed by the governor. The ex-officio membership consists of a juvenile court judge, a county commissioner appointed by the County Commission chair, the superintendent of schools, a state attorney, and a public defender.

case example: **funding allocations and resource development** system point–target population: taxing authority to fund services for juvenile offenders and at-risk youth ■ contact: Kathy Helmuth, Director of Communications ■ Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County ■ 6698-68th Avenue North, Suite A ■ Pinellas Park, FL 33781 ■ 727-547-5600, 727-547-5610 fax ■ www.jwbpinellas.org ■ khelmuth@jwbpinellas.org

FUNDING ALLOCATIONS AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Setting taxes is a government function, and property taxes are the primary revenue source for local governments. Those revenues fund schools, public safety, and public works departments, among other services. JWB's portion of the county's total tax revenue is set based on budget hearings at which all requests for the county's funding are considered. The actual tax rates are set by proposed millage (the tax rate expressed in mills, or tenths of a cent, per dollar for taxation of real property) necessary to fund the budget. Millage is expressed as dollars per \$1000 of taxable value. The concept of using dedicated property tax revenue to better the lives of children and families is no longer new, but agencies like JWB are relatively rare.

CHALLENGES OVERCOME

Because JWB is a unique funding source, a significant portion of the revenue makes its way to troubled youth through prevention programs. The enabling legislation states: "The Board hereby created shall have the following powers and duties: . . . to allocate and provide funds for other agencies in the County which are operated for the benefit of juveniles, provided they are not under the exclusive jurisdiction of the public school system."

JWB focuses on shifting funds from traditional social services—welfare agencies that sometimes do not foster independence—to those that promote self-sufficiency. One agency, Family Resources, offers family counseling, training, services for truant and runaway youth, runaway and in-crisis youth shelters, and an alternative suspension program for middle school students. Another project, JWB-TV, is a monthly half-hour television show about children and families shown on cable and on the Pinellas County government access. The show reaches a potential audience of 500,000 Florida viewers in Pinellas and Hillsborough counties.

JOB READINESS/WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

Missouri's state Division of Youth Services (DYS) operates on the belief that employment opportunity is essential to the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders. The Job Readiness/Work Experience Program began in 1995 to teach participants how to get and keep jobs and to allow them to earn and manage their own money. DYS selects participants and then places them in positions at DYS facilities and not-for-profit agencies in the participants' communities. The young people are expected to earn GEDs or return to school.

The initiative reaches any eligible offender in the state. Participants range from young people in community care, to the most violent offenders, to those under dual jurisdiction. Since its inception in 1995, more than 2000 young people have been employed through the program.

FUNDING ALLOCATIONS AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The Job Readiness/Work Experience Program is unusual in its funding and its organization. The program operates through a contractual agreement that includes the Division of Workforce Development and 15 Private Industry Councils (PICs). DYS provides funds to Job Development

and Training, which contracts with the PICs to use the money for local programs. Each PIC receives in its contract a specific number of work slots based on the number of DYS facilities in the area. The funds provided to the PICs pay the wages of DYS participants placed in work slots.

This innovative approach also allows DYS to forge working partnerships that might not otherwise exist with other state agencies. Thus, existing funds are maximized to promote skill development and employment preparation for juvenile offenders at any point in the system. Case managers work with individual young people to find work placements with nonprofit organizations and government agencies.

CHALLENGES OVERCOME

The Job Readiness/Work Experience program faced many of the same issues encountered by most youth development efforts: child labor laws, workers' compensation issues, and the tax laws. State policy prohibited DYS from paying young people directly for their work, so a system of "piggy-backing" was arranged and partnerships were created to address the need for youth employment without violating policies already in place. Each issue was addressed through careful research and the potentially complicated process was simplified. The Missouri Legislature has appropriated 100

case example: **funding allocations and resource development** system point–target population: incarcerated youth ■ contact:
Kit Glover ■ Job Readiness, Missouri Division of Youth Services ■ PO Box 447 ■ Jefferson City,
MO 65102 ■ 573-751-3324, 573-526-4494 fax ■ kglover@mail.state.mo.us

work slots throughout the state. In 1999, the jobs program had 667 participants, and data from 1998 showed that 84 percent of the participants had successful outcomes.

ISSUES TO ADDRESS

Inherent in any public policy is the problem of moving from design to implementation. A confounding issue for the Job Readiness/Work Experience Program is that each PIC has its own rules and policies. DYS is organized into five autonomous regions. To complicate matters, workers' compensation insurance payments, for example, differ depending on job category: Premiums for construction workers are higher than they are for office workers. DYS points out that consistency is not always the best policy.

ships

USE OF OJJDP FORMULA FUNDS, MINNESOTA COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION

OVERVIEW

In 2000, Minnesota's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC) awarded more than \$600,000 in formula grants from the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to 16 programs across the state.

The formula grants program was established by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) of 1974 to support state and local program planning and implementation. It provides funds directly to states, territories, and the District of Columbia to help implement comprehensive juvenile justice plans that are based on detailed needs assessments.

In fiscal year 2000, nearly \$77 million was available for direct awards. Allocations are based on a jurisdiction's juvenile population. Each jurisdiction designates an agency to implement the program. Contact information for administering agencies can be found at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/state.htm. JJDP requires that two-thirds of all funds be passed through to programs or units of general local government, local private agencies, and Indian tribes that perform law enforcement functions.

To participate, a jurisdiction must address 25 planning requirements set forth in the act and must comply with

four core protections for court-involved youth: deinstitutionalize status offenders and nonoffenders; separate adults and juveniles in secure institutions; eliminate the practice of detaining or confining juveniles in adult jails or lockups; and address disproportionate confinement of minority juveniles in secure facilities, jails, and lockups where overrepresentation has occurred. Any remaining funds can be used to support other juvenile justice and delinquency prevention services.

The Minnesota Department of Economic Security facilitated an open, competitive process to award grants to new and expanding programs. The committee used the money to reduce the proportion of minority young people detained or confined in secure facilities when the proportion exceeds minority representation in the general population.

FUNDING ALLOCATIONS AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

JJAC members are appointed by the governor to provide a local perspective on juvenile justice issues. The committee includes juvenile justice practitioners, concerned citizens, and young people. In allocating the funds, JJAC focused on three major program areas, in addition to those required by the federal government: delinquency prevention, diversion, and preadjudication; postadjudication programs; and after-care with an employment and training component.

case example: **funding allocations and resource development** system point–target population: prevention to aftercare ■ contact: Kay Tracy, Director ■ Office of Youth Development, Minnesota Department of Economic Security ■ 390 North Robert Street ■ St. Paul, MN 55101 ■ 651-296-6064, 651-296-5745 fax ■ www.mnfc.org ■ kay.tracy@state.mn.us

The first area emphasizes parent and family involvement in keeping at-risk young people out of trouble. It also offers funds for diversion, mediation, and restorative-justice programs; mentoring for low-income young people; and recreation and after-school programs. Delinquency prevention programs received the largest share of money in that group. Postadjudication funds went to programs that administer community service requirements and to counseling and education services. The aftercare programs included those that offer support for high school diploma or GED completion, individualized case management, mentoring, and subsidized or unsubsidized employment for ex-offenders.

CHALLENGES OVERCOME

A potential challenge was recognized and addressed from the outset: the need for a small working group. The collaboration and the subsequent funding worked successfully because the groups operate locally. They are able to operate efficiently and to provide a milieu in which group members can agree on common goals. The full text of JJAC's 2000 annual report is available online: www.mnwfc.org/youth/components/documents/reports/00Repts/00jjac.pdf.

COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR YOUTH, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

OVERVIEW

In 1995, the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) designed the Comprehensive Strategy for Youth, Family and Community as a model for youth in various states. In 1996, San Diego County, California, became a pilot site. The effort is regional, involving prevention, intervention, and sanctions. The nonprofit Children's Initiative administers the program in partnership with the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC).

It is not uncommon for good efforts to be undermined by poor communication, weak collaboration, and ineffective coordination. And the Comprehensive Strategy's success is seen in less duplication of effort; more remedies for system gaps; and well-integrated supervision, service, and support for young people.

The groundwork was laid with professional expertise, information, ideas, and methods culled nationwide. Researchers, front-line staff, executives, and community representatives developed a vision that all of San Diego's young people would become CLEAR (Caring, Literate, Educated and Responsible) members of their communities. Employment and independent-living programs serve those throughout the juvenile justice system: in prevention, intervention, graduated sanctions, and aftercare.

The program promotes CLEAR by supporting youth development in schools, health care, government agencies, faith

communities, and community-based organizations. It emphasizes prevention, and it provides immediate and effective intervention at the first sign of problems.

SYSTEM COLLABORATION

The Comprehensive Strategy is the first large-scale collaborative effort in San Diego County. In 1996, the Board of Supervisors appointed 22 members to JJCC, expanding representation beyond the 11 mandated by state law. Crime victims were added, and in 1999 membership was expanded to 25 by adding youth and business community representation.

The team identified critical service gaps in the region, most notably for vocational training in the skilled trades. Now, there is collaboration among workforce development initiatives, independent-living facilities, and numerous employment agencies and employers. The training plan and other interventions are based on literature review and empirical data, not anecdotal evidence. OJJDP has named San Diego's site as one of the nation's most promising.

The vocational program's originators wanted a system to guide young people toward positive life choices to help them attain emotional, social, and financial self-sufficiency. Success is seen in reduced dropout and truancy rates and increases in high school graduation or other certification. All participants complete vocational assessments and personal inventories by the end of 10th grade—half of them by

case example: **system collaboration** system point–target population:
prevention through aftercare for youth, aged 6–18 ■ contact: David Simmons, Project Director ■
Comprehensive Strategy, Children’s Initiative ■ 4438 Ingraham Street ■ San Diego, CA 92109 ■
858-581-5882, 858-591-5889 fax ■ www.childrensinitiative.org ■ dsimmons@san.rr.com

Grade 7; 25 percent in Grade 4. The idea is to identify strengths and interests early, so teachers, parents, and others can help students target education and career tracks. Specific options include career and vocational training, mentoring, and apprenticeship programs linked throughout the region.

CHALLENGES OVERCOME

Success was not a given for the Comprehensive Strategy. The team worked to identify leaders and key players to coordinate services. Comprehensive partnerships among businesses, the schools, the courts, and the community were established. Subcommittees identified what worked, what did not, and why.

San Diego County covers 4200 square miles, and its 3 million people use more than 50 languages. It has 18 cities and 43 school districts. The collaborators saw that providers—in health care and social services, schools, employment agencies—were working with the same groups. So a team casework approach was adopted, implementing one-stop-shops and eliminating replication. The Board of Supervisors merged the Health Department and the Department of Social Services, and the county combined services across the region.

Another challenge was the overwhelming need. Young offenders between the ages of 16 and 18 are especially difficult to help because they often do not have jobs or

housing options after they leave the juvenile justice system. The Comprehensive Strategy team works with this group to find independent-living arrangements or foster care and to provide employment training through multiple agencies.

ISSUES TO ADDRESS

The county has engaged in regional planning and decentralized service delivery, but because the Comprehensive Strategy covers such a large area, the partners now are looking more closely at individual communities, rather than the entire county. What they have found is that all share a common vision, and that although each might approach a problem differently, in the end most are accomplishing their goals. The lesson learned in San Diego is that different avenues can lead to effective results.

Additional challenges involve data and outcome evaluations. Funding sources require the group to work within a policy framework supported by research and data, rather than anecdote. Although collecting statistics is cumbersome, the group appreciates being “forced” to consider measures for evaluating programs and policy decisions. The next step is to complete an evaluation to identify accurate indicators. OJJDP requires rigorous case–control evaluation, another labor-intensive process that should yield useful results. OJJDP is finishing the data analysis for the Comprehensive Strategy sites and plans to start a preliminary impact analysis in 2002.

JUSTWORK

OVERVIEW

JustWork is a cooperative program of Nebraska's Vocational Rehabilitation department and the state department of Health and Human Services Office of Juvenile Services. The collaboration began in 1998 to serve Omaha-area young people (aged 14–19) who are involved in the juvenile justice system. The participants are low- to moderate-risk young people who tend to fall through the cracks. They often end up in commitment facilities when community placement might be more appropriate.

The program components of JustWork are primarily experiential, because so many of those being served have not had successful experiences in the traditional educational process. Participants undergo vocational assessment to determine job goals and placement in the appropriate program component. After assessment, young people enroll in experiential learning labs, where they learn about the world of work and become better prepared for workplace situations. The labs include independent-living training, tours of companies, community speakers, mock job interviews, and community resource awareness.

Young people also are matched with role models or mentors from the business community, a process that is still in the development stages. Young people who need more preparation before entering the job market are given volunteer or on-the-job-training placements. Such short-term placements

often lead to longer term employment. Once participants are employed, they receive follow-up services for a minimum of 90 days.

SYSTEM COLLABORATION

JustWork owes its success to the well-planned and detailed formal agreement that preceded its opening. Before the program began, the Vocational Rehabilitation department did not work with the juvenile offender population because its traditional focus had been on serving adults with disabilities. JustWork brought the department in to serve young people in transition from school to work. The adjudicated juveniles are individuals who are at risk, and many of them exit the public education system before they can receive transition services. This project serves only those young people who meet Vocational Rehabilitation's terms of eligibility and order of selection. Many participants have learning disabilities and are best served in experiential learning programs.

As part of the JustWork collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation, the Office of Juvenile Services provides or contracts for residential and nonresidential evaluation services, special-needs counseling, tracker services, day reporting, electronic monitoring, substance abuse counseling, and foster or group home placements. Referrals come from parole officers, juvenile trackers, other professionals, parents, and young people themselves. Youth Rehabilitation

case example: **system collaboration** system point–target population:
low- to moderate-risk youth in community placements ■ contact: Joni Minor ■ JustWork,
Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Education, Office of Juvenile Services ■ 5404 Cedar
Street ■ Omaha, NE 68106 ■ 402-595-1307, 402-595-1152 fax ■ j_minor@vocrehab.state.ne.us

and Treatment Centers also make referrals, and JustWork uses Verified Disability information to ensure that each identified student is contacted for services.

Vocational rehabilitation specialists help parolees develop the skills and attitudes they need for work, and they supplement their own expertise with continuous input from the team in Omaha. They work with vocational rehabilitation counselors, independent-living specialists, evaluators, and employment specialists. Each month, they discuss employment plans with a team that solicits perspectives from juvenile justice, vocational rehabilitation, and workforce development. Counselors focus on how a young person's disability can affect individual progress. Independent-living specialists address accessibility issues, and evaluators gather information about how each person's skills and abilities can translate into employment. Employment specialists who know the job market develop employer connections for the young people in the program.

CHALLENGES OVERCOME

Most of those referred have behavioral disorders as primary disabilities, and some have specific learning disabilities or mental handicaps. Of the 60–75 active cases, 39 are employed, most obtaining work as a result of Vocational Rehabilitation involvement. Only three participants have been incarcerated.

A major hurdle is forming partnerships. When two systems collaborate, they still require the services of numerous agencies and organizations, such as school systems or referral agencies. In this case, an unusual partnership led to a multitude of other collaborations, including those with parole officers, Family Service trackers, and others.

JOB CORPS AGREEMENT

OVERVIEW

For years, juvenile justice professionals have been critical of the more-or-less sanctioned tendency of Job Corps programs to discourage participation by court-involved youth. Most service providers for young people recognize that Job Corps participants and court-involved youth have a lot in common—and both groups benefit from a structured employment-training program.

Participation in the Job Corps program provides benefits to everyone: Juvenile ex-offenders get a chance to learn skills and gain workplace experience that often serves them better than traditional high schools can. The state benefits because those young people are less likely to join the ranks of reoffenders who must be adjudicated. Society profits from the addition of productive members in the community.

SYSTEM COLLABORATION

In 1997, the New York Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS, formerly the Division for Youth) and the U.S. Department of Labor, New York Office of Job Corps, signed a formal agreement detailing the conditions under which young persons being released from the juvenile justice system could enter the Job Corps. The agreement applies statewide and allows young people leaving residential juvenile justice facilities to enter the Job Corps as an aftercare transition. The text of the agreement is available online: www.aecf.org/publications/index.htm#youth.

The memorandum of understanding outlines the specific responsibilities of OCFS staff members and the Job Corps program. It covers the period from a young person's entry—usually 6 months before the end of a court placement—until graduation or completion of the program. The document also lists specific procedures for granting leave to participants, for handling program or personal problems, and for removing participants from a Job Corps center and terminating their participation—should the need to do so arise. One particularly beneficial component is that OCFS does not contract with the Job Corps for “slots” or “beds.” Court-involved young people are included in the program with the same rules and systems that apply to all other applicants. Thus, New York State saves a significant amount of money because it does not contract with a private provider for similar services.

As new issues arise, such as screening by an aftercare counselor or the need for a Job Corps liaison to OCFS, the agreement is revised and updated, allowing those who work directly with the young people to operate efficiently and in the best interests of the participants.

The Job Corps sends information to OCFS aftercare counselors about impending graduations. Once young people complete the Job Corps program, the OCFS responsibility ends, although some support services carry forward. The

case example: **system collaboration** system point–target population:
Aftercare ■ contact: Gayle Martel, Job Corps Liaison ■ New York State Office of Children and
Family Services ■ 52 Washington Street, Room 209 ■ Rensselaer, NY 12144 ■ 518-408-3021,
518-474-9403 fax ■ Gayle.Martel@dfa.state.ny.us

local aftercare office provides assistance when it is requested
for school records and referrals to other programs.

CHALLENGES OVERCOME

One significant challenge in most collaborations concerns
the way to develop support for the agreement or partner-
ship among the frontline staff. Often, decisions are made at
the state or regional level, and the formal agreements or
arrangements are not adequately passed down to the
counselors, teachers, or staff people who work directly with
the client population.

In this case, the challenges could include concerns that
young people from the juvenile justice system are singled
out for their behavior more than are youth without records.
Although juvenile records are usually sealed, leaks can and
do occur, often from other young people who might know
the released offender from a home community. In practice,
however, it is more often the case that OCFS participants
slip relatively seamlessly into the program. Although support
for an agreement can reach the highest levels of an operation,
implementation is where program effectiveness begins. This
initiative serves as an example of one that is working, but
the concerns must be kept in mind.

DIVISION OF CIVILIAN CONSERVATION

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

OVERVIEW

The Ohio Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was established by the state legislature in 1977 to provide unemployed young adults (ages 18–24) with life skills, work skills, and education while they work on meaningful conservation and recreation projects.

In July 1997, CCC and the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS) began a pilot project for young people making the transition from secure institutions to the community.

By 2002, more than 400 young people had been enrolled in the program. CCC maintains two residential and six nonresidential camps in various locations. Participants are paid minimum wage, and after 3 months are eligible for health insurance benefits. Merit raises, internships, and leadership positions are available at varying points. AmeriCorps Education Awards of up to \$4725 are available based on the number of service hours completed. Those who have received government services—welfare, foster care, court involvement, counseling, drug or alcohol services—are given preference in enrollment.

SYSTEM COLLABORATION

The 1997 collaboration between DYS and CCC began with a written agreement that detailed each agency's responsibilities. CCC committed to offer total learning: technical skills, employability skills, and life skills training. DYS agreed to dedicate project liaisons and to assist CCC

staff members in building strategies and interventions for working with court-involved youth. The results have exceeded expectations on both sides.

In 1999, in cooperation with federal, state, and local government and nonprofit agencies, CCC invested more than 300,000 hours in conservation-based service projects in 62 Ohio counties. Under the direction of the state's Emergency Management Agency and the Ohio National Guard, disaster relief services were provided in seven counties. Partnerships with those agencies and with the Ohio Department of Human Services (ODHS) led the Division of Civilian Conservation to propose an expanded program to serve young people with felony convictions. The statewide Independent Living Program was a success, and ODHS requested that CCC establish a partnership with DYS to enroll young people exiting the juvenile justice system. Program funds that had been directed to DYS were redirected to CCC to support the partnership. CCC developed a formal agreement with DYS that has resulted in the enrollment of 121 students; just 6 returned to the system.

CCC also created a new, collaborative approach to serving one group of young people typically ignored by human and youth service agencies: those who are turning 18 and no longer eligible for foster care. The result is an improved ability to assist corps members in the development of individual educational goals (GED, vocational education,

case example: **system collaboration** system point–target population:
youth in transition, facility to community ■ contact: Sally T. Prouty ■ Ohio Department of
Natural Resources, Division of Civilian Conservation ■ 4383 Fountain Square Court, B-1 ■
Columbus, OH 43224 ■ 614-265-6436, 614-447-8005 fax ■ www.dnr.state.oh.us/ccc ■
sally.prouty@dnr.state.oh.us

college), career plans, and support services. Upon enrollment all corps members enter a 40-hour training academy. Corps members then may enroll in on-site programs developed in partnership with the state's Department of Education Career Technical Adult Education Program. Partnerships with Hocking College and Terra Community College provide enrollment opportunities for residential corps members, and other local colleges and universities offer similar opportunities for nonresidential corps members. Still other partnerships provide financial and other support services for corps members.

Recently, CCC has focused on incorporating nationally recognized best practices standards for workforce development into the traditional corps program. Under the leadership of the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps, CCC participated in a \$1.3 million program, the Dewitt Wallace Readers Digest Corps-to-Career Initiative, which supported program design and postprogram support, tracking, and development of funding alternatives. Assessment by the National Youth Employment Coalition's (NYEC) Promising and Effective Practice Network (PEPNet) resulted in the program's being certified in 2000, based on nationally established best practices standards.

An ODHS Independent Living Program grant supports the enrollment of young adults who have received government assistance. Local workforce development agencies provide assessment, planning, and assistance with postprogram job

placement and support. The Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority re-established a CCC Youth Apprenticeship Program. Welfare-to-Work grants (from Cleveland and Columbus) provide financial support.

In fiscal year 1999, 501 young men and women enrolled in CCC for an average period of 10 months—an increase of 2.5 months (25 percent) over fiscal year 1998. Of the 313 corps members who left the program, 202 (65 percent) were employed, enrolled in college or another training program, or both. Eighteen had attained a GED and 132 had earned college credits during their time in the corps.

CHALLENGES OVERCOME

Forging partnerships is never easy, and connecting systems is always a challenge. Writing the agreement and designing the program were difficult. Like most juvenile justice agencies, DYS typically does not serve young people over the age of 18. And the Department of Natural Resources normally does not serve young people with felony convictions. The addition of ODHS to the effort could have made program development exponentially difficult. However, all the collaborators found that the challenges became opportunities because the system players were willing to cooperate and work toward the same goal.

SAFEFUTURES, CONTRA COSTA

PARENT ORGANIZATION:

Debbie Oldenettel, SafeFutures Coordinator
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810 Seventh Street, NW
Washington, DC 20531
202-616-3684
<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/safefutures>
oldenett@ojp.usdoj.gov

OVERVIEW

The U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) sponsors SafeFutures, which seeks to reduce juvenile violence and delinquency in targeted communities by eliminating risk factors and increasing protection of young people. Its specific program goals include providing a continuum of services for at-risk juveniles and appropriate immediate interventions for juvenile offenders. And it promotes a full range of graduated sanctions that hold offenders accountable to victims and communities, ensure community safety, and provide appropriate treatment and rehabilitation. Community capacity to institutionalize and sustain the continuum through expanded and diversified funding is another goal. Finally, there is an assessment component for project implementation and outcomes.

SYSTEM COLLABORATION

OJJDP designed SafeFutures to create partnerships between all levels of government that involved community and

youth; build on existing community strengths and resources; integrate information and services across agencies; and create a sustainable, community-driven strategic plan.

The Contra Costa County, California, is one of the six SafeFutures sites that implement a unique set of services to build on community strengths, services, and supports and fill in existing service gaps: family strengthening, after-school activities, mentoring, treatment alternatives for female juvenile offenders, mental health services, day treatment, and graduated sanctions for violent and chronic offenders. SafeFutures also has sites in Boston; Seattle; St. Louis, Missouri; Imperial County, California; and Fort Belknap, Montana.

Contra Costa County lies on the northeastern shore of the San Francisco Bay, and about 25 percent of its population of almost 900,000 is under the age of 18. The county is ethnically diverse: The Asian–Pacific Islander population has grown 156 percent in the past decade and the Latino population has grown even more. The western part of the county, where SafeFutures efforts are concentrated, is primarily urban. It has a large minority population, many of them poor and undereducated.

SafeFutures in Contra Costa accepts only youthful gang members who are being released from incarceration. Most have spent less than a year in corrections, and SafeFutures begins working with them before they are released.

case example: **system collaboration** system point–target population:
residential programs to aftercare for gang members ■ contact: Mark Morris, Project Director ■
Contra Costa County SafeFutures, County Administrator’s Office ■ 651 Pine Street, 10th Floor ■
Martinez, CA 94553 ■ 925-254-0911, 925-254-9185 fax ■ markomorris@home.com

SYSTEM COLLABORATION

SafeFutures efforts build on the work of local initiatives, including the Contra Costa Policy Academy, Family Preservation and Support, Partnership for a Drug-Free Contra Costa County, a violence prevention initiative of the California Wellness Foundation, and the East Bay Public Safety Corridor Partnership. Federal initiatives include a juvenile justice treatment network; a U.S. Department of Education Drug-Free Schools initiative; YouthBuild, a project of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); and two programs of the U.S. Department of Justice. Community-based initiatives include Community Oriented Policing Services and the National Collaborative on Violence Reduction.

Contra Costa SafeFuture has five areas of approach: a family-school-community partnership for early intervention and prevention; a gang initiative for prevention, intervention, and suppression; mental health services; a mentoring service for girls; and infrastructure-strengthening activities. A major focus is training for employment. First, supervisors and employers are located who understand the circumstances of and pressures faced by the client population. Every effort is made to avoid job placements in tempting situations; for example, those that involve handling money. Many SafeFutures participants work with YouthBuild, HUD’s job-training project in construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing. Others work for nonprofit organizations. But the largest group is in government jobs that are labor

intensive and closely supervised, often in public works. SafeFutures also offers workshops for those who need help developing marketable skills. Those who are interested attend community college or trade school or work as apprentices.

After participants are placed, staff members monitor worksites, talk with supervisors, and emphasize continuing education. About half of the participants transfer to better jobs while they are in the program, usually making the jump from subsidized to unsubsidized employment.

CHALLENGES OVERCOME

A major challenge to SafeFutures was finding jobs for juvenile ex-offenders. SafeFutures staff members found a selling point when they discovered that many local employers had downsized so much they no longer had anyone to do unskilled work. The staff finds employers who are willing to take a chance on a young person with a criminal history, locating employers who can “see themselves” in these young people and give them a chance to work.

ISSUES TO ADDRESS

SafeFutures staff members have identified a disconnect between their participants’ appearance and demeanor and what is expected in the workplace—especially in an office environment. Participants feel comfortable in the SafeFutures office, but there are no resources to create a new office to handle the number of young people who could benefit from training.

YOUTH INDUSTRIES PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

The Youth Industries Program is a cooperative effort between business and government in which juveniles committed to the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) work in apprenticeships. Participants learn trades that will provide them with the skills they need to make a successful transition back to their communities. Wages earned while they are committed are turned over to DJJ for victim restitution, child support, and as savings for eventual return to the community.

In 1996, planning and development of the Youth Industries Program began with the instruction of supporting legislation and a budget request for the construction of a facility in which the program could operate. The text of the authorizing legislation is available online: www.aecf.org/publications/index.htm#youth.

In late 1997, DJJ formed a partnership with Walker White, Inc., a Columbia-based plumbing and HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) company. Because there was a shortage of trained labor, Walker White was excited about cultivating new avenues for recruiting young people into the trades.

SYSTEM COLLABORATION

By 1998, DJJ was registered with the U.S. Department of Labor as an apprenticeship program site. Juveniles participating in Youth Industries are learning about sheet metal fabrication, with a focus on the job skills that will make them valuable to potential employers.

DJJ also worked with the private sector for job placement for the students. Through a collaboration with the South Carolina Mechanical Contractors Association—the

case example: **system collaboration** system point–target population:
youth in correctional facilities ■ contact: Lois Jenkins ■ South Carolina Department of Juvenile
Justice ■ PO Box 21069 ■ Columbia, SC 29221 ■ 803-896-9493, 803-896-8495
fax ■ lljenk@winthrop.djj.sc.state.us

umbrella organization for HVAC, plumbing, and electrical contractors in the state—successful graduates of the Youth Industries Program receive assistance in finding employment with contractors in their home counties upon release from the DJJ. They are then able to continue the apprenticeship program in their own communities.

CHALLENGES OVERCOME

Because the program has only been in operation for a short time, long-term job placement and recidivism rates are unavailable. However, the success highlighted here is based on the system's ability and perseverance cooperating with agencies outside a specific area of expertise. Concessions were made and arrangements secured to allow young people from all parts of the state to participate in a registered apprenticeship program within the confines of a juvenile correctional facility.

RECLAIM OHIO

OVERVIEW

In 1991 Ohio was second only to California in the number of young people held in juvenile correctional institutions, with almost 4000 felony delinquent youth committed to the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS). Ohio's juvenile corrections facilities had operated over capacity since 1982, and they were becoming more crowded every year. In 1991 they were filled to 150 percent capacity.

Ohio's juvenile corrections facilities house mostly the male and the poor, and they are just 15 or 16 at the time of commitment. They are disproportionately black; one in nine of Ohio's African-American boys will be committed to the state by the age of 18. A third have been committed to DYS before. Most have had problems at school: Many of them are at least two years behind, they have histories of suspension or expulsion, and many have already dropped out. Most use drugs and alcohol and come from troubled families. Many already have children of their own.

RECLAIM (Reasoned and Equitable Community and Local Alternatives to the Incarceration of Minors) Ohio was established by the General Assembly in June 1993 as an alternative to incarcerating young offenders. It was seen as the most positive change in juvenile justice in Ohio in a decade, and the program became operational Jan. 1, 1995.

RECLAIM Ohio created the annual \$65 million Care and Custody Fund for distribution to Ohio counties, which can use their share to provide effective community-based services for nonviolent young offenders or, for more difficult cases, to purchase custodial care from the state.

SYSTEM FLEXIBILITY AND REFORM

RECLAIM Ohio gives local judges more sentencing options for each youthful offender by providing state subsidies for community-based care. At the same time, DYS improves its treatment of young offenders by reducing the institutional population. Institutional overcrowding increases the risk of suicides, assaults (inmates on one another, inmates on staff, staff on inmates), escapes, and crime within the institution. Overcrowding also means there are not enough staff members or teachers, and so too much of the population is simply warehoused—doing “dead time” and watching TV.

Ohio's 88 counties handle the program's community-based component, and county commissioners serve as the fiscal agents for RECLAIM Ohio funds. The money is administered by juvenile courts, which work in collaboration with community advisory boards or Family and Children First councils.

case example: **system flexibility and reform** system point-
target population: sentencing of delinquent youth ■ contact: Carol Zimmerman, RECLAIM Ohio ■
Ohio Department of Youth Services ■ 51 North High Street ■ Columbus, OH 43266 ■
614-466-8783, 614-387-2606 fax ■ www.state.oh.us/dys/RECLAIMOhio.html

Each county receives an allocation based on the number of felony adjudications in the county's juvenile court. Once a month, the county is debited 75 percent against the allocation for each young person placed in a DYS institution and 50 percent for each community corrections facility placement. Any funds that remain after debits go to the county treasury. Counties may use that balance to purchase or develop community-based programs for felony offenders who otherwise would be committed to the state system. The funds also may be used to develop programs and services for other adjudicated juvenile offenders. The juvenile courts contract with private agencies to provide services that range from family counseling to electronic monitoring and from day treatment to preparation for independent living.

During its first year, RECLAIM Ohio provided juvenile court judges with just under \$18 million to serve more than 8600 youth in community programs. The number of DYS commitments dropped, despite an increase in the number of felony adjudications. In 1996, the Ford Foundation and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University named RECLAIM Ohio as a finalist in the Innovations in American Government Awards program.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

OVERVIEW

A Neighborhood Conference Committee (NCC) consists of local citizens who act under the authority of the Travis County Juvenile Court Department as an arm of the court. Committee members are volunteers who live or work in a specific area, such as a ZIP code or a school district. The committee structure provides an informal and voluntary method for resolving minor legal problems within a community.

NCCs meet with young people (10–16 years old) and their parents separately to gain a complete picture of the family's life and determine the possible causes of the criminal act. The committee then determines what sanctions are appropriate for the offense and for each family involved and creates a contract that everyone signs. Entering into a contract with the committee is not considered an admission of guilt, and participation is voluntary.

NCCs serve several purposes: They engage and empower neighborhoods to administer community justice; provide resolution of misdemeanors that allows restoration of loss to the neighborhood, redemption of the juvenile, and restitution to the victim; lend support to troubled families; reduce Juvenile Court backlogs; and make for speedier disposition of Class A and B misdemeanors.

The concept of neighborhoods becoming involved in juvenile justice has been at work in Texas for more than two decades. El Paso County began its Juvenile Court Conference Committee program in 1979. NCC in Travis County began in 1996, and more than 500 conferences were held in its first 4 years of operation. By 200, nearly 300 young people had successfully completed the program and 60 to 70 were in active cases.

Neighborhood volunteers are the heart of the program, but they are supported by a such partnership agencies as the Austin Police Department, Travis County Health and Human Services, and the Travis County District Attorney's Office.

SYSTEM FLEXIBILITY AND REFORM

Because the normal formal hearing process is obviated by NCCs, young are given the chance to continue education and employment instead of spending time in a facility or on probation. The process helps families resolve disputes and makes juveniles accountable for their behavior without formal court involvement. The conferences are held in a convenient neighborhood site during the evening so young people stay in school and parents are not required to miss work time.

case example: **system flexibility and reform** system point–target
population: alternatives to adjudication of juvenile offenders ■ contact: Dawn Wiedeman, Liaison
■ Neighborhood Conference Committee, Travis County Juvenile Court, Travis County Health
and Human Services Department ■ 100 North IH-35, Suite 3500 ■ Austin, TX 78701 ■
512-854-7090, 512-854-7080 fax ■ dawn.wiedman@co.travis.tx.us

Completely separate from the state’s juvenile justice system (the Texas Youth Commission), NCCs work at the front end of the system, intervening before a young person is committed to a state agency. And the local approach has demonstrated positive results as a statewide initiative for more than 20 years. Six areas of Travis County are now being served.

CHALLENGES OVERCOME

The most pressing challenge is the recruitment and retention of neighborhood volunteers. The nature of the program is cyclical, slowing in the summer. Volunteers are often lost during the down times. NCC staff have formulated partnerships and are conducting outreach initiatives to recruit more volunteers from neighborhood associations, faith-based organizations, and schools. Teachers are some of the most likely potential volunteers.

ISSUES TO ADDRESS

Another challenge that requires more outreach is the need for meeting space. Schools often provide space during the academic year, but in the summer, they are often booked with other programs or are under construction.

IOWA COLLABORATION FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

The Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development is an evolving partnership of state and local entities concerned about youth and youth policies. This initiative is designed to better align state policies and programs and to encourage collaboration among state and community agencies on youth-related issues, with the aim of focusing on ways to provide for the safety and well-being of Iowa's young people. The initiative promotes positive youth development principles in state policies and programs and facilitates effective youth development across the state.

In 1998, Iowa was one of nine states to receive 5-year discretionary grants of \$120,000 each from the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The competitively awarded grants were to support state-level collaboration and community-capacity-building activities. The state's lead agency is the Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP) of the Iowa Department of Human Rights. State agencies, community and statewide youth organizations, local agencies, and research institutions also are involved.

FYSB has a history of promoting a youth development philosophy, and it produced a framework that provides a theoretical foundation for youth development. The framework can be used by program developers, program

managers, and youth service professionals in developing and implementing service models and approaches that redirect young people in high-risk situations to positive pathways of development. The framework identifies four principles that govern the development of young people as they move toward successful and productive adulthood: a sense of industry and competence, a feeling of being connected to others and to society, a belief in personal control over life direction, and a stable identity.

Many youth services policy and funding decisions are made at the state level. To encourage and support a youth development approach, FYSB promotes the sharing of information about, and collaborating on, youth development efforts at all levels. The goal of the competitive grant program is to facilitate youth development as states address the needs of adolescents.

Since January 1999, the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development has met to discuss youth development issues, to build consensus on a youth development framework, and to promote youth development principles and practices. The group pursues three broad objectives:

- Use a positive youth development framework to improve the coordination and alignment of youth policies and programs.

case example: **youth development** system point–target population: prevention through aftercare for youthful offenders ■ contact: Richard Moore, Administrator ■ Youth Development State Collaboration, Iowa, Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning, Iowa Department of Human Rights ■ 321 East 12th Street, Lucas State Office Building, 2nd Floor ■ Des Moines, IA 50319 ■ 515-242-5816, 515-242-6119 fax ■ www.icyd.org ■ Dick.Moore@cjjp.state.ia.us

- Identify or develop community resources to promote successful planning and implementation of effective youth development programs.
- Increase youth involvement in state and local policy discussions and decision making.

CJJP was one of several state entities to receive funding from FYSB to help communities provide young people the support and opportunities they need to become healthy and productive adult citizens. Underlying the youth development approach is a focus on young people's strengths rather than their problems and general agreement that community empowerment is the main vehicle for change. Positive youth development engages young people in situations that connect them to caring adults and that help them become useful and competent members of their communities.

CJJP was established through Iowa's state code. It carries out research, policy analysis, program development, and data analysis to help policymakers, justice system agencies, and other partners identify issues of concern and to improve the operation and effectiveness of Iowa's justice system. CJJP staff members provide a justice system information clearinghouse (www.state.ia.us/government/dhr/cjjp) for system officials and the general public.

CJJP also administers federal and state grant programs to fund local and state projects aimed at preventing juvenile crime, providing services to juvenile offenders, and otherwise improving Iowa's juvenile justice system. Those funds are made available each year through competitive grants. CJJP carries out its duties under the oversight of the Iowa Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning Advisory Council and the Iowa Juvenile Justice Advisory Council.

Iowa's collaboration has two specific goals: First is replacing fragmented and deficit-driven youth policies and programs at the level with a coordinated youth development approach. The second goal is to build the capacity of communities to use positive youth development in providing youth services.

CHALLENGES OVERCOME

When broad-scale collaborations are the goal, the challenge is ultimately to contend with multiple partners and agencies and the corresponding competing interests. Iowa's partners made making rapid progress in shaping a shared vision.

One method for creating a common vision is to develop definitions that apply across systems. Those from the workforce development system are learning juvenile justice terminology; others acquire knowledge regarding workforce development. A common language that specifies the vision and goals is advantageous to the group's progress.

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We are grateful to the representatives of each of the initiatives profiled in this toolkit for sharing their time and stories with us. And we thank the many young people who shared their insights and whose successes are testament to the worth of the programs and policies of the initiatives featured.

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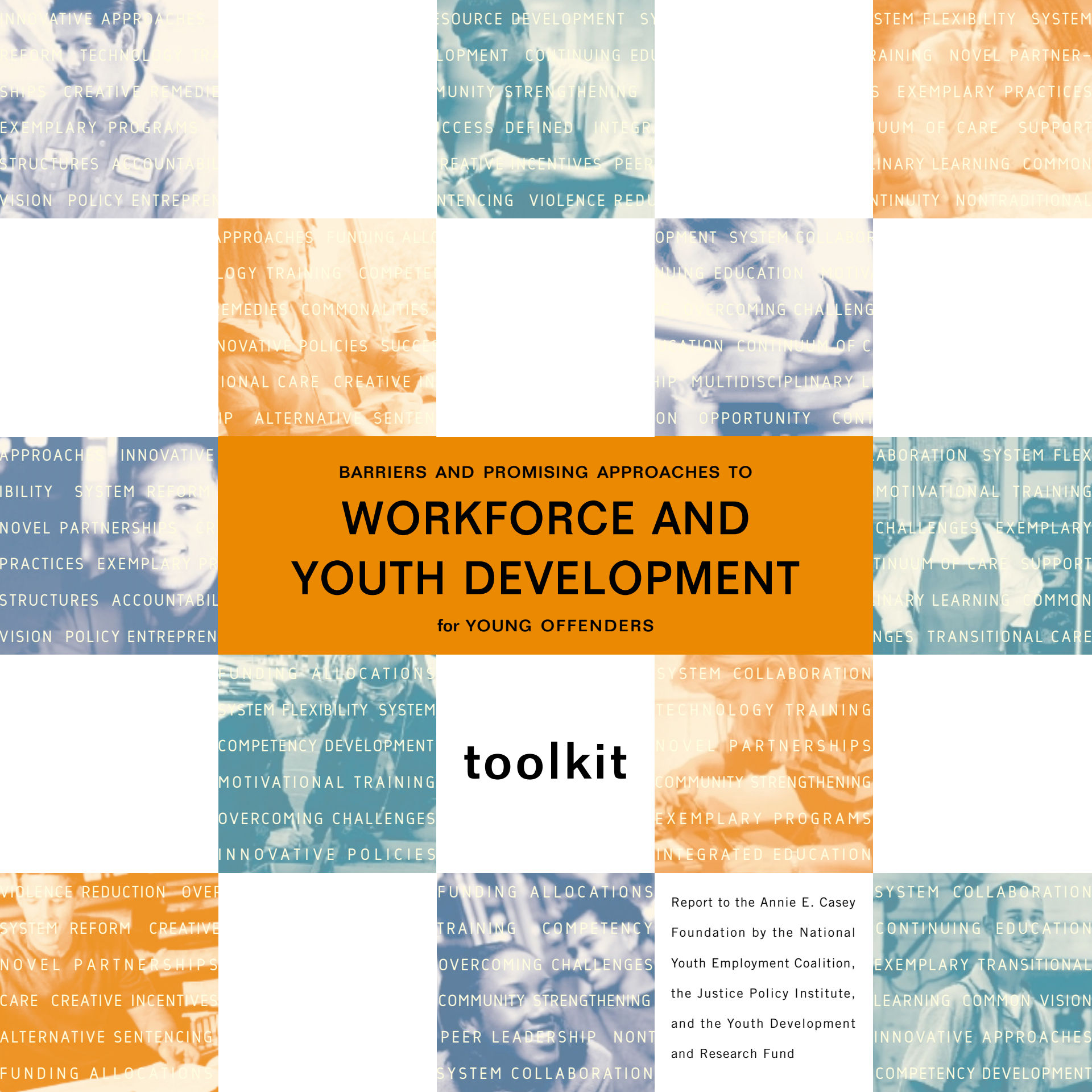
ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. It was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of United Parcel Service, and his siblings, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and neighborhoods fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs. For more information, visit the Foundation's website, www.aecf.org.



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BARRIERS AND PROMISING APPROACHES TO

WORKFORCE AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

for YOUNG OFFENDERS

toolkit

Report to the Annie E. Casey
Foundation by the National
Youth Employment Coalition,
the Justice Policy Institute,
and the Youth Development
and Research Fund

Barriers and Promising
Approaches to
Workforce and Youth
Development for
Young Offenders

PROGRAM PROFILES



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introduction

In 1997, the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the U.S. Department of Justice sponsored a task force to study ways of meeting the employment and training needs of young people who had been in trouble with the law. The task force was convened by the Home Builders Institute, which was searching for ways to enhance vocational preparation, reduce youth crime and recidivism, and improve the prospects for court-involved youth in the labor market.¹

In 1999, the Annie E. Casey Foundation asked the National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC), in cooperation with the Youth Development and Research Fund (YDRF) and the Justice Policy Institute (JPI), to build on the task force's work. The Foundation wanted to identify what works: exemplary programs and policy initiatives that help court-involved youth become economically self-sufficient.

The question of whether employment and training programs are the solution to the problems that confront the juvenile justice system is a legitimate one. For a good portion of the past two decades youth crime and juvenile justice have been subjected to sustained attention and study. The issues matter to policymakers, juvenile justice workers, politicians, and parents, and they matter to the young people themselves.

The national study undertaken by NYEC, JPI, and YDRF had three objectives:

- Identify barriers to reform of the juvenile justice system and review the literature on youth employment, workforce development, and juvenile justice.

- Survey and synthesize information about innovative state and local policy initiatives that promote effective programming.
- Examine exemplary youth employment and development programs that explicitly serve juvenile offenders.

The resulting three-part toolkit examines the systemic barriers to achieving economic self-sufficiency for court-involved youth; it identifies creative approaches to overcoming those barriers; and it details how communities, stakeholders, and practitioners can more effectively prepare young people involved in the juvenile justice system for self-sufficiency and productive citizenship. The overview outlines some of the problems and identifies some of the avenues to their solution, this portion highlights 15 exemplary programs in the world of criminal justice for young people, and there is another part devoted to 19 exemplary policy initiatives.

The programs highlighted here were selected as a way to define a set of common, effective practices. What we learned was that, even though all are criminal justice programs in whole or in part, their efforts are based on youth development principles.

There have been few systematic efforts to identify the key elements of programs that prepare court-involved young people for economic self-sufficiency. Public and private institutions usually focus on prevention or on crisis intervention to mitigate the costs to society of juvenile crime and delinquency, rather than exploring how to more effectively habilitate, rehabilitate, and reintegrate these young offenders so they can become productive members of society. In contrast to many programs within the juvenile justice system, the programs highlighted here are guided by a

comprehensive set of principles that view young adults and their needs holistically. They are grounded in an assets-based approach that stresses young people's strengths and works to empower them instead of focusing on their perceived deficits.

Among the critical elements that reflect the core principles of youth development are mentoring, community service, leadership development, positive peer-centered activities, and long-term follow-up and supports. The 15 programs here demonstrate that the core principles can be applied to the field of juvenile justice. Whether we as a society want to be tough on crime or not, the recent history of juvenile justice has demonstrated that building more juvenile prisons, placing more young people in adult facilities, and imposing more punitive sanctions are not working.

All 15 programs have found ways to advance youth development principles despite the limits imposed on organizations that serve juvenile offender populations. And the fact that they all have recidivism rates below 20 percent raises some good questions: Is it more cost effective and "tough on crime" to place young people in a juvenile correctional institution or in programs similar to those highlighted here? Which alternatives best serve the needs of the community? Which best meet individual needs? Perhaps by shying away from infusing youth development into the work of juvenile justice, we have confused being tough on crime with being tough on criminals, and in the process we have crippled a good portion of a generation of largely minority young people.

METHODOLOGY

We contacted researchers, policymakers, funders, and practitioners to identify 30 juvenile justice youth programs that displayed promising practices in preparing youthful offenders for

successful education and work-related outcomes. That list was subsequently pared to 15 sites by contacting each program for more information and then critically applying PEPNet criteria² for effective practice. Six of the 15 programs had received recognition from PEPNet, a project of NYEC that was formed to recognize and support an international network of effective youth employment initiatives and, in the process, to act as a mechanism for building knowledge and disseminating information to practitioners, policymakers, and the public on effective youth employment and development programming.

The PEPNet effective practices criteria are based on a matrix of standards that encompass five broad categories: purpose and activities, organization and management, youth development, workforce development, and evidence of success. The 15 programs were chosen based on application of those criteria and on the demonstration of exemplary practices. The PEPNet criteria were used because they examine youth employment programs through the lens of youth development principles that have been shown to provide long-term success for at-risk youth. And although not all 15 programs have been subjected to external evaluation, their methods, service delivery and management strategies, organizational ethos and missions, and staff and youth culture have been evaluated for a wide array of youth development commonalities and the actualization of an assets-based approach.

Each site was visited and subjected to a four-step evaluation. First, we toured the program's grounds and facilities to get a picture of what services were offered to participants, how services were delivered, and whether the environment was supportive to participants and conducive to the learning process.

Second, we conducted an extensive interview with each site director. This conversation explored the philosophy and mission of the program's educational and employment efforts; elicited specific information about what kind of academic instruction, vocational training, and support services the program delivered; and examined how programs accomplished the goals of imparting skills and providing services. The interviews also covered staff development, outcome measures, accountability, and other features that might have been unique to the program. We collected performance data on each to quantify the initiative's success at minimizing re-incarceration and providing positive educational and employment outcomes.

Third, we interviewed staff members to gain their perspective on the organization and its effectiveness. These interviews explored more fully the various facets of the program to determine whether staff members felt they were integral to the program's mission, believed they were empowered to strive for its successful attainment, and seemed truly dedicated to the improvement of the lives of at-risk youth.

Finally, we interviewed participants to get a sense of whether their expectations, experiences, and outcomes matched the observations of staff and program directors.

After the site visits, we prepared short reports, the results of which make up this section of the toolkit. The reports offered an overview of each program, identified the population and the point in the juvenile justice continuum at which it intervened, gave outcome data, and, most important, listed exemplary practices.

NOTES

¹Task Force on Employment Training for Court-Involved Youth. *Employment Training for Court-Involved Youth*. Washington, D.C.: U.S Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, November 2000. Online: www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/ojjdpreport_11_2000/index.html.

²For more information on PEPNet, visit www.nyec.org/pepnet, call 202-659-1064, or send a fax request to 202-659-0399.

AVON PARK YOUTH ACADEMY

OUTCOME DATA

Seventy-eight percent of Avon Park Youth Academy students complete the program; 40 percent earn GEDs or high school diplomas; 78 percent receive vocational certification; 81 percent remain employed after 6 months. Before the 2000 adoption of Street Smart, a postprogram support and follow-up initiative, the recidivism rate was about 17 percent; the current rate is below 10 percent.

OVERVIEW

Avon Park opened in 1998 as a private, 212-bed residential facility for 16- to 18-year-old male repeat offenders classified as “moderate risk” and sentenced by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice to a perimeter-secure facility—one that students may not leave without permission. Avon Park’s 9-month-long program simulates real living as much as possible to prepare residents to hold jobs with living wages. The population is screened twice for physical and mental capacity to engage in rigorous vocational training and hands-on work experience.

Avon Park provides academics, job training, and life and community-living skills to facilitate self-sufficiency and permanency planning. Its programming seeks to balance the tension between security, freedom, and empowerment in a noninstitutional, homelike setting. Avon Park looks and feels more like a college campus than a correctional facility. Participants live in duplexes in groups of 8–10 that

form small, intimate communities within the larger group, which is governed by a student-run council of elected officials.

Students do their own cooking, cleaning, laundry, and groundskeeping, and they can earn and schedule house activities and recreational events. Residents take personal responsibility for their daily affairs; they arrange their own schedules to account for academic and vocational training, work schedules, and group meetings; and they budget credits earned in the token economy system to purchase activities, campus store merchandise, and off-site outings. Students also receive intensive social and independent-living skill training that helps them relate to peers, maintain character, earn living wages, and manage income.

The vocational program emphasizes the development of positive workplace skills, beliefs, and behaviors. Residents train for the real working world as much as possible. Each has an employment counselor and a case manager to help with career exploration, identify strengths and weaknesses, and develop career objectives. Each develops a career portfolio through which he produces a résumé, conducts a job search, interviews for jobs, and practices job readiness skills.

In the final third of their stay, participants receive wage-earning, work-based experience, either on site or off, depending on behavioral performance. Certification is

case example: **residential program** system point–target population:
adjudication of youthful repeat offenders, aged 16–18 ■ contact: Derrick Witherspoon, Director
■ 242 South Boulevard ■ Avon Park, FL 33825 ■ 863-452-3815, 863-542-4302 fax ■
derrickwitherspoon@hotmail.com

available for the culinary arts, masonry, flooring, horticulture, plumbing, electricity, carpentry, building maintenance, landscaping, business, and auto mechanics. Once they obtain jobs, Avon Park residents must meet normal workplace standards for behavior, punctuality, job performance, and relationship and communication skills. Some participate in Homebuilders, an intensive training and building trades certification program.

Avon Park augments vocational training with academic work and with support structures, postprogram support, and follow-up. New Century software, which tailors reading, writing, and mathematics curricula to students' specific strengths, weakness, and educational needs, is used each day with instructor supervision. Students supplement this learning with individual and small-group work focused on tying academic skills to the workplace. Each student has a peer mentor and a counselor, and all participate in subject-specific group work (for example, for substance abuse issues) to develop the mental capacity to achieve academically and vocationally.

Avon Park Academy's support continues after graduation. A recent grant was used to create Street Smart, which provides support services for 12 months after students graduate. In their final 2 months in the program, residents work with staff members to develop transition plans and to find work. In this phase, residents find jobs, get drivers' licenses, find

secure living situations, and either earn or are given a \$500 stipend to start living independently. Street Smart transition specialists and community support workers help each former resident to support himself on the outside, and they offer referrals and support to help each young person maintain a decent standard of living. Implementation has coincided with a drop in the recidivism rate to below 10 percent.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

Avon Park Academy's "normal" living and working environments prepare young offenders for release to the community. The academy adheres to its philosophy that the real-world approach is the best way to help students take responsibility for their lives while they are in the academy and after they leave.

CAREER EXPLORATION PROJECT

PARENT ORGANIZATION

Center for Alternative Sentencing and
Employment Services
346 Broadway, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10013
212-732-0076
www.cases.org

OUTCOME DATA

The Career Exploration Project (CexP) began in 1997 and has had more than 125 participants. Seventy-five percent have completed preinternships; 54 percent have completed internships. All graduates pursue high school diplomas, GEDs, or college. Almost 70 percent proceed to other jobs or internships, and almost half are working 6 months after graduation. Ninety-five percent of CExP participants complete the Court Employment Project, which provides young felony offenders with a structured, rigorous program of education, employment preparation, job placement, and counseling.

OVERVIEW

CExP provides alternative sentencing for first-time felony offenders who are placed in an intensive 6-month program that encompasses education, vocational training, personal development, and internship placement. The 15- to 19-year-old participants come from New York City's low-income neighborhoods. Sixty percent are African-American, 38 percent are Latino, and 10 percent are female.

CExP is a project of the Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES), which helps young offenders gain skill and self-confidence before they exit the justice system as responsible, productive members of their communities. CASES works to find fair, productive, and cost-effective alternatives to traditional sentencing. Applicants must be currently enrolled in an education program, and they apply through a personal essay and interview. Those who are selected are placed in one of four annual project cycles that serve 50–60 young people each year. The 6-month-long program begins with a month-long preinternship, followed by internship placement. Participants are supported and supervised throughout their work experience and through “alumni programming” after graduation.

Preinternship participants enter a 32-hour training program that helps them begin to identify career interests, assess skills and weaknesses, and develop communication skills. They write résumés, search for jobs, practice for interviews, gain experience in team building and problem solving, and learn conflict resolution skills for managing workplace frustrations. Participants must maintain 90 percent attendance and display competence and enthusiasm to receive internship placements.

Interns develop concrete job skills but they also learn about workplace cultures and obtain a clearer grasp of the role of education in career development. As they learn to identify

case example: **alternative sentencing** system point–target
population: adjudication of first-time felony offenders, aged 15–17 ■ contact: Joe McLaughlin,
Executive Director ■ 346 Broadway, 6th Floor ■ New York, NY 10013 ■ 212-553-6650,
212-553-6379 fax ■ mclaughlinj@cases.org

and pursue job networks, they gain self-confidence. An effort is made to place interns at sites that match their interests and cultural backgrounds. Employers are selected who will extend themselves to CExP participants and act as mentors. Placements have included Net Café, a minority owned cyber café; Soul Fixins, an African-American owned restaurant; and *Stress Magazine*, a hip-hop culture publication. During the school year, interns work 14 hours each week for 10 weeks to earn weekly stipends of \$100. Summer employment is for 20 hours a week for 8 weeks; the stipend is \$150. Participants have 2-hour meetings with staff members each Friday to discuss experiences, voice concerns, and listen to and meet with guest speakers who often provide further motivation and resources.

Project coordinators are participants' main points of contact. They develop close relationships with participants and act as mentors, teachers, and even friends. Case managers help participants comply with court mandates and develop individual service plans. Case managers attend mandatory training sessions on substance abuse education, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, the workings of the criminal justice system, and anger management. Participants in the Looking Ahead program are paired with New York University students and graduates, who act as mentors to help participants make the connection between school and positive work outcomes.

Staff members' mandatory training extends up to 25 hours and includes workshops on workplace issues, conflict management, professional ethics, and home-based family interventions. Training is tailored to staff needs and interests. Many staff members are CExP graduates who offer current participants their unique insights.

Once participants complete their internships, CExP staff members help with the transition to full-time employment or education. As alumni, participants can continue to use CASES services and are invited to guest lectures and other educational and recreational events.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

CExP does not simply train and educate young people in job-related skills; it establishes and formalizes opportunities for participants to build these new skills. By providing concrete work experience, CExP ensures that participants' new skills and insights are not wasted, but are channeled through work experience. Participants make a clear connection between education and work preparedness, and they come to terms with a work culture that often is antithetical to their past norms of behavior. Many of the program's role models are successful minority professionals. CExP provides support and supervision during participants' work experiences and after graduation so they can reflect on their experiences, learn from them, and use the knowledge and skills they have gained to set themselves on a productive educational and employment path.

CORRECTIONS CLEARINGHOUSE

OUTCOME DATA

In fiscal year 1997–1998, some 3080 inmates graduated from Corrections Clearinghouse (CCH) institutional courses. Nearly 1500 inmates got Social Security cards, 1500 obtained forms of identification, and about 200 registered with JobNet, the Washington state job bank. In 1996–1997, 1312 ex-offenders enrolled in work orientation programs; 776 of them were placed in jobs, and 151 were promoted to jobs with higher wages.

OVERVIEW

CCH is the branch of the Washington State Employment Security Department that works with corrections officials to provide services that motivate inmates and released prisoners to find employment instead of reoffending. CCH works with about half of the state's correctional institutions to provide services that include not just incarceration but also job placement and other postrelease services. CCH integrates academic and vocational training with job readiness and placement into a three-part program of direct, brokering, and coordinating services.

Direct services include institutional courses and postrelease job search assistance in the Ex-O Program for inmates from five adult and seven juvenile institutions. CCH staff members teach prerelease courses on Transitional Employment and Job Dynamics, and they offer vocational assessments.

CCH also provides help with obtaining Social Security and state identification cards and with JobNet registration.

After release, ex-offenders get help through the Ex-O Program. The clearinghouse contracts with community organizations and with Employment Security Job Service Centers to provide job counseling, skills training, post-placement services, and advancement opportunities.

CCH collaborative efforts have included the establishment of the Corrections Alliance, which allocates the funds from the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1990 to correctional education programs; and the founding of VOTE (Vocational Opportunity Training and Education), a college program for ex-offenders in recovery from chemical dependency.

The most prominent example of CCH's coordinating services is the Access Washington Resource Directory (www.awrd.org), which lists 10,000 social service resources in the state of Washington, accessible by county, ZIP code, or type of service. The National Institute of Corrections has a database (www.nicic.org) that allows people in other parts of the country to conduct similar searches.

The CCH juvenile team has developed the Juvenile Vocational Industries Program (JVIP), a partnership of

case example: **workforce development** system point–target population:
adjudication of juvenile and adult offenders ■ contact: Douglas Jacques, Director ■ Washington
State Employment Security Department ■ 605 Woodland Square Loop, SE, PO Box 9046 ■
Olympia, WA 98507 ■ 360-438-4060, 360-407-5218 fax ■ djacques@esd.wa.gov

local school districts, the state Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration, and CCH, for offering vocational and industrial education to incarcerated youth. JVIP teaches work ethics through experience, and the program helps juvenile offenders pay restitution, room and board, federal taxes, and build up savings for their eventual release. Offenders learn to market themselves while they receive job training. They also gain an understanding of restorative justice—confronting the consequences of their actions and the pain they may have caused their victims—and learn personal accountability.

interviewing, job searches, and career advancement. The release of inmates back into society thus becomes a communal process, although ex-offenders are expected to take personal responsibility for the decisions that govern their lives.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

One element that sets CCH apart is its comprehensive emphasis on providing a continuum of services: It works not just to help ex-offenders to get jobs or enter other programs, but it helps participants to continuously improve their economic and personal well-being. The Ex-O Program is a bridge for young offenders entering or re-entering the job market. All participants attend job readiness classes in the weeks before they leave a facility. They wear business attire and classes are conducted in a real-world manner that both impresses on participants the challenges they will soon face and prepares them to overcome obstacles to success. CCH's contracts with community-based organizations and Employment Security Job Service Centers provide ex-inmates with vocational assessments, help with writing résumés and

CRISPUS ATTUCKS YOUTHBUILD

PARENT ORGANIZATION

YouthBuild USA

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617-623-9900, 617-623-4359 fax

www.youthbuild.org/YBmain.html

Dstoneman@youthbuild.org

OUTCOME DATA

The Crispus Attucks YouthBuild Charter School ended the 1999–2000 year graduating 52 students who were once high school dropouts or had struggled in conventional schools. Overall, students maintained an 83.5 grade point average and an 81 percent attendance rate. Eight graduates received scholarships. The remaining graduating class entered the workforce at wages that averaged \$7.86 per hour.

As of 1997, all students who demonstrated an 8th-grade reading level received a high school diploma. Graduates have a 5 percent recidivism rate among 74 percent previously involved in the juvenile justice system. Seventy-four percent of graduates are employed after graduation.

OVERVIEW

YouthBuild is a comprehensive youth and community development and alternative education program.

YouthBuild runs on a 12-month cycle, offering job

training, education, counseling, and leadership development opportunities to unemployed and out-of-school young adults, ages 16–24, through the construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing in their own communities. YouthBuild USA helps to coordinate and support the various YouthBuild programs across the country.

The YouthBuild program in York, Pennsylvania, began in 1994, and the Crispus Attucks charter school was founded in May 1999. Crispus Attucks is now a 12-month day school that integrates the completion of a high school diploma with training and certification in the building trades. Crispus Attucks serves 60–120 students between the ages of 16 and 24. Its recruitment focuses on high school dropouts, nonviolent offenders, low-income young people, and those struggling to cope with mental and behavioral challenges. Twenty-two percent of the students are female, and 40 percent qualify for special education services.

Crispus Attucks prepares young people to become mentally tough by accepting responsibility for themselves, their families, and their communities. The program begins with a drug test, and because there is an 85 percent positive rate, it starts with 2 weeks of group sessions, life skills training, and personal responsibility training to begin the detoxification process. Drug counselors help students who continue to use drugs, and participants who are not drug-free do not graduate.

case example: **workforce development** system point–target population:
juvenile offenders and at-risk youth, aged 16–24 ■ contact: Cynthia Dotson, YouthBuild Director ■
605 South Duke Street ■ York, PA 17403 ■ 717-848-3610, 717-843-3914 fax ■
www.crispusattucks.org/YBCS.htm ■ Cdotson@crispusattucks.org

Crispus Attucks participates in several other collaborative projects, establishing solid relationships with judges, police and parole officers, and boot camps that provide discipline for youth with severe behavior problems. Construction employers offer suggestions for curriculum revisions and improvements, and they provide meaningful job opportunities for program graduates. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and AmeriCorps subsidize tuition for participants between the ages of 22 and 24 who are ineligible to attend a charter school. Nike, Inc., sponsors recreational activities and a basketball team.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

Crispus Attucks is noteworthy for its creative use of incentives and rewards. First, by paying students real wages, the program helps participants connect hard work with meaningful results. But the program goes beyond this standard reward system by distributing wages based on weekly evaluations that communicate to participants that school and workplace behavior, beliefs, and cultural norms are just as instrumental to long-term success as are concrete job skills. Participants are thus motivated by the economic incentive, but they also become invested in their behavior in a way that allows for true and rapid learning.

Crispus Attucks offers participants core academic and vocational training. Each week, students alternate between job training and classroom work; half go to a construction site,

and the others attend classes that include traditional academic subjects, counseling, and vocational soft-skills training. Students are paid for their academic work and their construction training, and they can earn up to \$725 dollars a month rehabilitating low-income housing. Wages are based not only on hours worked and work performance, but also on weekly evaluations of development and display of positive workplace behaviors, beliefs, and values.

In support of the balance of restorative justice model—confronting and supporting the victims of crimes—a portion of student wages is attached for taxes, child support payments, and court-imposed fines. Crispus Attucks provides job placement, support, and follow-up after graduation. Individual Learning Accounts, which are matched-fund savings plans contributed to by employers and employees, provide a growing asset base to fund long-term education and training.

Students also participate in community service projects that reinforce positive behaviors, they receive counseling, and they work with mentors and participate in need-specific support groups. Crispus Attucks collaborates with a local community center, which provides on-site child care and offers referrals for health care, housing, domestic abuse assistance, and other social services.

CUNY CATCH

OUTCOME DATA

In 1999, CUNY Catch worked with more than 2000 young offenders at Rikers Island, New York City's main penal institution, and it offered educational and vocational programming for more than 500 participants at three college campuses. There is a 95 percent success rate for students who take the GED exam. Fifty percent of 1999 participants enrolled in college; the rest were provided with job placement assistance.

OVERVIEW

The CUNY (City University of New York) Catch Program was established in 1991 to provide transitional services for inmates returning from Rikers Island to their home communities. The program is a collaborative effort of the university, the state Department of Corrections, and the Board of Education. Through early intervention in prison and close collaboration with services at Rikers, CUNY Catch has helped inmates make the transition from jail to community-based campuses for continued counseling, training, and education. CUNY Catch complements, reinforces, and extends the academic and vocational training efforts that start at Rikers Island's high schools.

The program reaches about 3000 juveniles, offering outreach and programming for those who are detained and awaiting trial for a wide range of criminal offenses or who have been sentenced to less than a year at Rikers Island.

The program continues its effort after juveniles are released, working with 800 students in programs at Long Island's LaGuardia Community College, Bronx Community College, and Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn.

CUNY Catch offers workshops, seminars, and motivational programming for students at Rikers Island several days each week. A full-time transitional care specialist works as a permanent liaison between the university and the facility.

CUNY Catch staff members work to encourage enrollment in GED programs and vocational services and in the community college programs. Staff members try to maximize individual contact with Rikers students, so each one is given a card listing contact information. This helps the population to connect CUNY Catch with a face and a name.

Transition officers strive to demonstrate that there is a viable life beyond the correctional facility. They talk with participants about their dreams and goals and about CUNY's programs. Guest speakers and program graduates act as living testimony to the power of education and work experience. A creative writing professor works with participants to train them in written expression and to channel their ideas into practical visions for the future.

When young people return home from Rikers, they often face the same risks and institutional barriers to success that

case example: **transitional program** system point–target population:
juvenile ex-offenders, aged 16–18 ■ contact: Adolph Smith, Coordinator ■ 1150 Carroll Street,
Room CP-27 ■ Brooklyn, NY 11125 ■ 718-270-6478 ■ [www.mec.cuny.edu/academic_affairs/
continuing_ed/ext_prgms/workforce/cuny_catch.htm](http://www.mec.cuny.edu/academic_affairs/continuing_ed/ext_prgms/workforce/cuny_catch.htm)

led them to crime in the first place. Catch staff members motivate the young people to develop legal options for gainful employment.

CUNY Catch offers ex-offenders academic and vocational assistance and referral services on three college campuses. The postrelease program includes a small-group GED preparation class that helps ex-offenders to earn certification, learn the soft skills they need in the workplace, and apply to college. Students generally are given as much time as they need to prepare for the GED exam, but the program sets high standards and constantly pushes participants to take responsibility for their beliefs and behaviors. GED program participants are welcome to use various college resources: the library, computer labs, recreational facilities, day care services, and guidance counseling.

During and after their enrollment in the GED program, students are assisted with finding jobs and applying to college. CUNY staff members offer job-readiness training that includes résumé writing and interview skills. Staff members make a conscious effort to help young people work on daily behavior: how to greet people, make eye contact, carry themselves, and communicate.

CUNY Catch offers referrals to meet needs beyond vocational training and education. Collaborative efforts include work with New York's Covenant House, a transitional-living facility; substance abuse counseling; and mentoring for ex-offenders.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

CUNY Catch reaches young offenders while they are incarcerated to promote successful transitions from institutional living. The estimated recidivism rate for Rikers Island's ex-inmates is 70–80 percent. And most young people return to New York communities to face the same pressures, lack of hope and opportunity, and personal problems that led them to Rikers in the first place. CUNY Catch's work combats this reality with education, job readiness training, and support. Staff members often make appointments with young offenders while they are still inside Rikers so that, immediately upon release, young offenders know there is a place to go for help with active, voluntary steps to protect their own futures.

Principals at Rikers Island high schools credit CUNY Catch's commitment to outreach with providing the most consistent, positive message the young people receive. The staff members do more than just show up: Their workshops and seminars are based on respect for the youth they serve—their needs, their desires, and their ability to focus on positive information. Staff members challenge the young people to think and act according to high standards. And as the young people become motivated and educated, they are given a concrete promise for a brighter future. Incarcerated youth often lead lives of broken promises—their own included. The most compelling evidence of CUNY Catch's effectiveness is that young offenders who serve time in Upstate New York facilities often go to the CUNY Catch program based on contact they had on Rikers Island years before.

DAYTON YOUTHBUILD

PARENT ORGANIZATION

YouthBuild USA

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Somerville, MA 02144

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www.youthbuild.org/YBmain.html

Dstoneman@youthbuild.org

OUTCOME DATA

Eighty-seven percent of Dayton, Ohio, YouthBuild students get jobs, join the military, or continue their education.

The school follows up with students for 5 years, providing continued support and guidance.

OVERVIEW

Established in 1999 as a charter school, Dayton YouthBuild is part of YouthBuild USA, a comprehensive youth and community development program that provides alternatives to incarceration (although many students attend voluntarily) and offers academic instruction and training in the building trades. Three-quarters of the participants are 16 to 17 years old, but the group ranges from 16 to 24. Fifty-seven percent of participants are African-American; 43 percent are white. One quarter of the group is female, and 10–15 percent qualify for special education services.

Dayton YouthBuild's 12-month cycle includes job training, education, counseling, and leadership development opportunities for unemployed and out-of-school youth. Participants work in construction and rehabilitation of low-income housing in their own communities. The 4-quarter school year is divided into 11-week units, and the goal is to have students complete high school rather than pass the GED. The program is competency based, rather than unit based, so students may leave as soon as they gain the necessary skills. Students are referred to the program and then assessed to determine their skills and interests.

The first 6-week period is dedicated to education. Students spend mornings in classes and afternoons at work so the skills they acquire have immediate relevance. The next 5 weeks are spent working with a vocational curriculum approved for use at work sites by the National Center for Education and the Economy. Dayton YouthBuild focuses on helping students obtain building trades certification from community colleges. Particular to the Dayton program is Improved Solutions for Urban Systems Trade and Technology Prep. This partnership between business, technology companies, educators, and social service providers gives young people meaningful trade, construction, and technology-based work experience. Currently, about 300 students are enrolled; half of them were referred by

case example: **workforce development** system point–target population:
juvenile offenders and at-risk youth, aged 16–24 ■ contact: Ann Higdon, Executive Director ■
100 North Jefferson, Suite 602 ■ Dayton, OH 45402 ■ 937-223-2323, 937-223-9303 fax ■
lsusinc@aol.com

juvenile courts. Students repair and rebuild abandoned homes for low-income families, helping both to add to the affordable-housing stock and to improve their communities.

Dayton YouthBuild integrates work and the academic curriculum, so students gain practical job skills as they receive an education, develop life skills, and learn the soft skills they need to work outside the program. Academic credit is transferable to community college.

Three on-site counselors, a special education teacher, and a substance abuse counselor provide support. Staff members are trained to connect to participants academically, socially, and emotionally, and their diversity reflects that of program participants. Dayton YouthBuild collaborates with the juvenile justice system, Sinclair Community College, the Rotary Club, and other organizations. Many graduates go on to construction-related jobs or to college. Alumni receive postprogram counseling.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

Dayton YouthBuild combines academic education, vocational training, work-based experience, and the principles associated with a balance of restorative justice. Participants prepare for real-world experiences by focusing on all aspects of their educational, vocational, and personal development.

Their hands-on projects allow them to connect what they learn in the classroom with real work and to understand the value of education in concrete terms.

Dayton YouthBuild emphasizes the importance of understanding the economy and the various industries in which participants might work. The Improved Solutions for Urban Systems program unites the academic, business, and technology communities. Finally, Dayton YouthBuild helps young people to understand how their actions affect others by allowing them to produce work that has a direct, positive effect on low-income communities.

FERRIS SCHOOL FOR BOYS

OUTCOME DATA

On average, students at the Ferris School for Boys exhibit a 3.5-grade increase in reading and a 2-grade increase in math scores over 6 months. Eighty percent complete the GED.

OVERVIEW

Eighty-eight adjudicated boys, ages 13–18, are sentenced to this secure facility for 6–9 months at a time. This 5-year-old program has Middle States accreditation, and 99 percent of students are adjudicated from family court. The program operates in a Level 5 secure-care facility for serious offenders, and it offers comprehensive educational and support services.

Residents typically are repeat offenders for drug- and alcohol-related crimes, robbery, or violent offenses. The racial composition fluctuates: The population in the fall of 2001 was approximately 60 percent African-American, 20 percent white, and 20 percent Latino.

The Ferris School curriculum is set up in 3-week modules, and students are evaluated at the end of each. Students progress through the program—from orientation to advanced and honors classes—based on those evaluations and on weekly behavioral and emotional check-ups. Peer support and a system of increasing privileges are used to motivate students to advance. The school uses small-group academic instruction—the student-to-staff ratio is

usually 8:1—tailored to students’ personal needs. Sixty percent of Ferris students qualify for special education services, and the program is carefully designed to engage them in a learning process that will improve their academic performance rapidly.

Students also prepare for workforce entry in an 18-week program that teaches decision-making and soft and hard skills. Students complete various tests and measures that help them to explore career interests. Classrooms have computers, and there is a computer lab where students can develop marketable job skills.

Ferris has arts and sports programs, recognition assemblies, and cultural events such as diversity month. Townhouse-type housing allows students to feel they are a part of a community and can participate in the development of the program. Ferris emphasizes community service through various projects, such as providing landscaping services and visiting retirement communities.

A critical feature of the Ferris School program is participation in HOSTS (Help One Student To Succeed), which connects each boy with a mentor. HOSTS is a nationwide reading and math program that seeks to dramatically improve the academic, social, and emotional growth of students who are at risk of failing or dropping out of school. The program began in Vancouver, Washington, in

case example: **residential program** system point–target population:
adjudication of boys, aged 13–18 ■ contact: Delores McIntyre, Principal ■ 959 Center Road ■
Wilmington, DE 19805 ■ 302-993-3858, 302-993-3820 fax

1971 under the auspices of the Vancouver School District. HOSTS expanded and became independent in 1977. Its programs have served more than 1 million students across the United States and in El Salvador.

Ferris School's staff members must have bachelor's degrees and state certification in special education in their subject area. Staff development is emphasized through 5–6 days each year dedicated to program development, training, and improvement. Exit interviews are part of protocol. Staff members also have access to a professional library.

Legislators and local business people often are invited to meetings at the facility or to become principal for a day. Ferris hosts community meetings, and there are biweekly meetings with parents. The school maintains a close relationship with the State Department of Education.

Before they are released, students participate in a transition program in Level 4 security. During this period, they begin to interact with the community as they make the transition into work, fulfill community service requirements, and use home passes. After completing Ferris, students return to school or find jobs. Students are monitored by probation officers and receive postprogram support and services.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

The mentoring partnership between the Ferris School and the DuPont Company as part of the HOSTS program is the first of its kind in the nation to benefit incarcerated students. DuPont employees are trained by HOSTS to work one-on-one with students, and the company funds the program. Mentors volunteer for at least 1 hour each week, and they are trained to use students' lesson plans. Because mentors work with Ferris students for 6–9 weeks, students are exposed to adults who are not just academic tutors, but confidants, supporters, and friends, while they are away from home.

FRESH START

OUTCOME DATA

In 1999, average attendance for Fresh Start was 95 percent. Math aptitude increased 1.2 grade levels, and language arts skill increased 1.8 levels. More than 75 percent of participants returned to school or were employed 6 months after completion, and the re-incarceration rate was below 10 percent.

OVERVIEW

Fresh Start is a 9-month-long, project-based education and vocational training program for 20–30 offenders, aged 16–20. Participants are male and female and predominantly African-American. They are referred from the Department of Juvenile Justice based on history of criminal violations, emotional or physical victimization, and educational or economic disadvantage.

Fresh Start structures staff directives, programming, and core principles on the philosophy that self-esteem comes through achievement: Participants succeed if they are pushed to achieve and are given the practical experience necessary to transform potential and desire into skills and self-confidence. The Fresh Start experiential learning program in maritime and construction trades helps students develop skills, behaviors, and attitudes that are appropriate to the workplace.

The group follows a schedule of 8-week modules.

Participants must commit to the program, and tardiness within the first 2 weeks is grounds for expulsion. Each day, students spend 90 minutes in formal academic instruction, including GED preparation; the balance of their time is spent working. One early module, Tool Box, builds student proficiency with hand tools. Once a student demonstrates competence with a given tool, the tool goes into the box. By the end of the 8 weeks, that student should have a complete set for use throughout the rest of the program.

In the Production module, students work in all phases of Fresh Start's chair- and boat-building companies. These for-profit businesses are completely student run (a different student foreman is appointed each day to supervise operations), and they emulate the real workplace as much as possible. Participants must adhere to a strict attendance policy, demonstrate appropriate behavior, and complete daily assignments that can run from construction to advertising design to financial planning.

Students learn concrete skills at the same time they learn the value of collaborative work. To succeed and advance, they must draw on resources and support provided by teachers and their peers.

Two aspects of Fresh Start reinforce its vocational focus: self-evaluation and support structures. Students' behavior is

case example: **workforce development** system point–target population:
adjudication of young offenders, aged 16–20 ■ contact: Greg Rapisarda, Director ■ Living
Classrooms Foundation ■ Lighthouse at Pier 5, 717 Eastern Avenue ■ Baltimore, MD 21202 ■
410-685-0295, 410-752-8433 fax ■ www.livingclassrooms.org ■ Greg@livingclassrooms.org

tracked daily, and progress through the program is charted with a point system based on self-evaluation. The evaluative measures were developed with input from employers about the behaviors, skills, and attitudes they want to see in employees: the ability to cooperate and stay on task, to produce a high-quality product, and to maintain professionalism. Participants rate their progress each day and review their efforts with instructors. Students' weekly point totals are measured against goals, which are increased quarterly during the program. Points determine basic privileges and are used as markers to divide business profits among the group.

Fresh Start extends individualized support and plans of instruction to all students. There is a 1:5 teacher–student ratio, so everyone has meaningful contact in every aspect of the program. Staff members are hired based on their commitment to youth development, their vocational expertise, and their past job performance. They are trained in conflict management, positive feedback techniques, and how to guide the self-evaluation process. They meet weekly to respond to student needs. All of this allows staff members and students to develop strong, productive relationships.

Students meet weekly with counselors to discuss individual treatment plans. And at the beginning and end of each day, students meet to express their concerns and desires. Fresh Start works with each participant to develop a personal

transition plan that identifies specific goals. Retention specialists, who provide 3 years of postprogram support, staff a workforce development center. Students are placed in internships toward the end of their stay, and they move on to viable employment and are referred to external support services. Longer term participants act as role models and mentors for initiates.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

As an assets-based program, Fresh Start places workplace power in the hands of participants. The students are directly accountable for the success of the company—they are management and labor—so they make direct connections between work and profit. Participants are not taught simply the value of work; they learn the value of developing appropriate personal and professional standards.

As one program director said, Fresh Start doesn't decide what participants can or cannot achieve: It allows them to discover their own potential and their own will to meet expectations and produce results.

FRIENDS OF ISLAND ACADEMY

OUTCOME DATA

Those who complete the program have less than a 17 percent rate of reconviction; 60 percent obtain a GED.

OVERVIEW

Friends of Island Academy (FOIA) is a private, nonprofit organization that provides educational, vocational, leadership, and life skills training and a system of supports and mentoring for about 350 ex-offenders, largely from Rikers Island, a New York City correction facility. Participants are between the ages of 10 and 21. Sixty percent are African-American, 39 percent are Latino, 12 percent are female, and 80 percent are below the poverty level.

FOIA welcomes, empowers, inspires, and challenges young people to take responsibility, first for themselves and later for their peers and communities. FOIA emphasizes its community atmosphere and sets standards and expectations for all participants. FOIA provides a caring, compassionate environment that challenges while nurturing and supporting each young person.

FOIA assistance and services begin on Rikers Island. Former youthful offenders, hired as staff members, conduct workshops directed at encouraging those who will be released to take responsibility for their own development and, once they are free, to participate in FOIA's programs.

Participants complete Milestones plans, charting their previous and future life courses.

FOIA offers a range of comprehensive services. In conjunction with the Board of Education, participants may enroll in GED training. Basic literacy training is offered as well, because 75 percent of incarcerated young people read below an 8th-grade level. Participants also can learn about word processing, spreadsheets, databases, and how to use the Internet. There are referrals to alternative high schools and to the City University of New York system. College preparatory classes are offered, as are modest scholarships to continue or enhance education.

FOIA offers job readiness training and opportunities to participate in creative and recreational activities. The job readiness course includes role-playing, résumé writing, how to fill out a job application, how to dress appropriately, and how to interview successfully. A full-time job developer–employment coordinator helps participants find and apply for work. Young people participate in sports leagues, go to movies and museums, and a couple of times a year work with a poet in residence to produce a book of poems that is read at the Donnell Library in Manhattan.

Participants have access to counseling services and mentoring relationships, and they meet individually or in groups in a class called the “think tank” to discuss interpersonal

case example: **voluntary transitional programming**

system point–target population: ex-offenders, aged 10–21 ■ contact: Clinton Lacey, Director ■

500 Eighth Avenue, Suite 1209 ■ New York, NY 10018 ■ 212-760-0755, 212-760-0766 fax

■ www.foiany.org

relationships, anger management, conflict resolution, stress and harm reduction, health care, substance abuse, sexuality, bereavement, domestic violence, and sexual abuse. Because so many incarcerated youth exhibit signs of mental illness and depression, FOIA has expanded its referral network to include community psychiatrists and in-patient psychiatric facilities.

FOIA recruits and intensively trains community volunteers and pairs them with the ex-offenders who come to the program. Mentors meet with participants each week, and they receive biweekly institutional support from FOIA about how to most effectively connect with and assist program participants. The result has been a needed source of role modeling, compassion, and companionship that pays off in improved educational and vocational outcomes for young offenders.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

In addition to their academic, vocational, and life skills training, FOIA youth are empowered to become community leaders and advocates for positive values and behavior.

FOIA gives them a chance to use their skills, talents, and voices to promote social change and to develop peer relationships in a supportive, positive environment. Each week, meetings and workshops address social and personal issues in participants' lives. Speakers, special trips, and cultural and recreational opportunities help to strengthen the group's ties and provide positive social outlets.

An extension of the youth leadership program is the GIIFT Pack (Guys and Girls Insight on Imprisonment for Teens), which offers peer-to-peer education to 2000 young people each year about the perils of street life and the hard realities of incarceration. GIIFT Pack participants are trained by FOIA staff to share their experiences and communicate in a way that provides insight to at-risk youth about ways to distance themselves from the beliefs and behaviors that limit success. Members work in small groups to reach out to public schools and community-based organizations several times each week. They attend monthly planning meetings, and GIIFT Pack participants have been incorporated as permanent members of the guidance offices of two South Bronx schools.

GULF COAST TRADES CENTER

OUTCOME DATA

A 2000 study by the Texas Youth Commission reported that Gulf Coast Trades Center graduates have a re-arrest rate of 16 percent. The rate for group home programs is 26.5 percent, it's 54.7 percent for other contract programs, and it's 60.9 percent for Texas Youth Commission state institutions. Eighty-four percent of the students enrolled between September 1999 and August 2000 completed the program, and 70 percent of those young people had jobs that paid an average of \$6.25 per hour.

OVERVIEW

Founded in 1971 through a cooperative effort between the City of Houston, the AFL–CIO, and other groups, Gulf Coast Trades Center is a residential program for juvenile offenders, aged 16–19. The program is comprehensive but focuses largely on vocational training and skill development. In 1998–1999, Gulf Coast served about 200 juvenile offenders who were referred predominantly from Houston, San Antonio, and the surrounding rural areas.

The Gulf Coast Trades Center increases the social and economic independence of disadvantaged youth, based on a philosophy that stresses the worth and dignity of each person and the belief that the strengths existing within the individual can be directed toward maturity and responsible citizenship. Participants are sent to the center for 9-month periods. They advance through the program's four levels by exhibiting specific behaviors and accountability.

Participants receive incentives that include recreational opportunities and off-site excursions.

Student activities are focused in the chartered, diploma-granting Raven School, where the curriculum emphasizes vocational development, skills training, multimedia learning opportunities, and community service. Students spend most of their time in small classes learning to develop the positive beliefs, behaviors, and the soft and hard skills they need to succeed in the workplace. Young offenders supplement skill building with practical experience in construction, auto maintenance, painting and decorating, business and technology, and the culinary arts.

Gulf Coast students participate in a YouthBuild low-income housing project, and they learn to work with computers and audiovisual equipment. They get drivers' licenses, they start savings accounts, and they complete community service requirements that demonstrate the connection between personal action and community well-being.

Gulf Coast students receive formal academic training and learn through a multimedia approach that is both relevant and engaging. They use video and audio equipment and innovative computer software to assess their academic and vocational abilities and interests. Instruction includes GED and SAT preparation. Students also receive skills training and take part in entrepreneurial and leadership

case example: **residential program** System Point–Taget Population:
adjudication of juvenile offenders, aged 16–19 ■ contact: Thomas Mike Buzbee ■ PO Box
515 ■ New Waverly, TX 77358 ■ 936-344-6677, 936-344-2386 fax ■ www.gctcw.org
■ gctc@gctcw.org

activities that help them integrate and reinforce their other areas of learning.

The Raven School provides independent- and transitional-living classes, substance abuse education, gang seminars, career and college exploration, and driver education. Students also can choose to join a youth council that plans community events and projects, acts as youth court, and offers consultation to the Board of Directors to ensure that board decisions include the voices and concerns of young people.

Gulf Coast offers various support structures, including postprogram assistance. Participants' caseworkers help them devise individual treatment plans that are reviewed monthly. Students also participate in nightly group sessions that serve both as an evaluation tool and as a place to build relationships and vent emotions. After completing the program, graduates receive assistance for more than a year, first for finding jobs and then for advancing up the employment ladder. Gulf Coast offers a special aftercare program for young offenders struggling to deal with being on parole. The center participates in operating emergency shelters that can help ex-offenders make the transition to independent living.

The Gulf Coast Trades Center staff is ethnically diverse, highly qualified, and truly committed to the growth and development of young people. Staff members receive at least 40 hours of training each year on a range of issues,

including counseling, safety, and crisis intervention. The center measures such aggregated outcomes as grade level gains, GED awards, participants employed at completion (and average wage), homes constructed, number in transitional living, and participants in leadership programs. Program progress is reviewed weekly and monthly, and the Board of Trustees receives quarterly reports. Contracting agencies monitor student progress through regular monthly audits. "Big picture" outcomes are publicized in the center's newsletter and in quarterly and annual reports.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

The Gulf Coast Trades Center's strong record of success is tied to identifying the strengths of its students and giving them hands-on, empowering work to do. Programs help the students identify and improve their strengths, and they are held accountable for their actions through nightly self-evaluations and a level system that rewards positive behavior. They profit from their success, academically, vocationally, and financially, and they are allowed the individual creativity and flexibility to meet personal goals.

MAYOR'S JUVENILE JUSTICE ACTION PLAN

OVERVIEW

The Mayor's Juvenile Justice Action Plan (MJJAP), San Francisco, California, has six programs that provide intensive services across the juvenile justice continuum. MJJAP targets young people at risk of becoming serious, chronic offenders and those who are entrenched in the juvenile justice system.

The Mayor's Criminal Justice Council originally met with 100 youth service providers and 400 stakeholders in the juvenile justice system to create the Comprehensive Action Plan for Juvenile Justice. The plan covers reciprocal restitution, continuous accountability, training and technical assistance, competency and character development, and "surround services" — comprehensive supports designed to address all of a young person's needs.

The plan was to target at-risk young people through prevention activities and current offenders through rehabilitation. A joint effort among public and private agencies led to the programs: the Community Assessment and Referral Center (CARC), the Life Learning Academy, Bayview Safe Heaven, Early Risk and Resiliency, Mission Safe Corridor, and the Life Learning Residential Center for Girls.

CARC is an alternative to juvenile hall for 11- to 17-year-olds arrested for a variety of criminal offenses. After contacting an arrested juvenile's family, CARC is a

single point of entry for developing an individual plan of intervention, assessment, public and community-based service integration, and referral. Each young person also is assigned a case manager and a mentor.

The Life Learning Academy is a diploma-granting, extended-day charter school for 60 students. Its project-based curriculum includes academic studies, the arts, social and vocational skills, and conflict management. The academy requires a high degree of competence from its students in the basic academic subjects, but its project-based curriculum helps them make connections between classroom learning and the skills and abilities they need to succeed in the real world.

Academy students major in one of the four elements—air, water, earth, and fire—and daily lessons, activities, and vocational experiences are structured around these themes. Water majors study oceanography and marine biology, for example, and they learn boat repair and sailing, participate in swimming and scuba classes, visit aquariums and marine laboratories, and work closely with the Treasure Island harbormaster and the Maritime Museum. The academy stresses peer leadership, earned responsibility and privilege, community service, and art and environmental education. Students also participate in interpersonal groups and mentoring.

case example: **intake, assessment, and intervention**

system point–target population: at-risk youth and chronic offenders, aged 10–18 ■ contact:

Mimi Silbert, President ■ Delancey Street Foundation, 600 Embarcadero ■ San Francisco, CA 94107 ■ 415-512-5190, 415-512-5186 fax

Bayview Safe Haven is an after-school program for at-risk youth enrolled voluntarily or as a condition of probation. Safe Haven provides academic assistance, a bicycle repair program, art and environmental education, organized sports, and outings to cultural and recreational events. Each student is assigned a mentor who provides one-on-one support and guidance.

Early Risk and Resiliency works with middle schools, city agencies, and community-based providers to identify young people at risk of chronic criminal behavior. Student assessments identify strengths and talents and help participants maximize these areas to overcome deficits. The program links young people to community organizations and provides follow-up case management.

Mission Safe Corridor reduces crime in the Mission Street area by increasing law enforcement presence. Members of the Serious Offenders' Supervision Team—a probation officer, an outreach worker, and a police officer—collaborate to enforce curfews for young people on probation. Mission Safe Haven, an after-school program, provides an alternative to the streets.

The Life Learning Residential Center for Girls serves a 14- to 17-year-old population. They receive academic, vocational, and interpersonal training, and they focus on realistic family or residential aftercare plans.

Each program is subjected to comprehensive, independent evaluation that includes pre- and postintervention assessment and case–control studies. Baseline data are gathered on participants at the time of entry, and follow-up information is gathered at 6-month intervals. Data elements include school attendance and performance, recidivism, probation status, and substance abuse. The earliest assessments suggested that participants show improvements in performance-based outcomes and in emotional and psychosocial development.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

MJJAP provides a broad range of services to arrested juveniles who need crisis intervention, assessment, and social services, and it offers prevention services and education to at-risk youth. Unlike many youth-serving organizations MJJAP does not operate in a limited scope and its structure does allow some control over what happens to young people after they move on from a specific program. CARC's mentors and case managers provide a critical brokering service for young people and their families who must navigate the criminal justice and social service bureaucracies.

OMEGA BOYS CLUB

OUTCOME DATA

The Omega Boys Club has 11 institutes with 160 graduates and 70 college graduates. Its participants received more than \$250,000 annually in scholarships. Listeners across the country have heard the Omega message on Street Soldiers Radio, a syndicated talk show with 39 affiliates and an audience estimated at a half-million listeners.

OVERVIEW

The California-based Omega Boys Club is a violence prevention organization that offers young people information, skills training, outreach, counseling, and scholarships to help keep them alive and free. It serves young adults in 28 urban communities across the country and accomplishes its goal through preventive care in schools and with the work of volunteers to the program. About one-third of Omega participants are referred by the juvenile justice system. Omega serves young people throughout the juvenile justice continuum.

Omega has 57 projects across the country that use its Street Soldiers methodology to help young people overcome the disease of violence; this program also aims at rehabilitation by helping young people to develop beliefs and behaviors that promote personal growth and development. Omega's philosophy is not based on work or school attendance as solutions; rather, it focuses on preparing young people psychologically to meet and overcome the challenges of life.

After a decade of research, Omega developed a three-step program, offered in once-a-week classes in a 36-week college preparatory course that includes academic and life skills training. Its support structures include counseling, assistance in continuing education, college scholarships, and follow-up for those released from the juvenile justice system. The Omega Institute and the International Training and Replication Program train youth service providers. A book, film, and radio program spread the Street Soldiers message nationwide.

The 36-week course is divided into separate, 90-minute sessions for girls and boys, and it reaches 120–150 young people at a time. The sessions are taught by Omega's executive and assistant directors, and they use young people's language, hip-hop music and culture, urban videos, community-based issues, and ethnic culture and history to engage participants in self-analysis of behavior and belief.

More specifically, the class cycles through themes that include respect, friendship versus "fearship," and media images. The program thus helps young people understand the urban survival disease that leads to incarceration or death, it allows them to identify risk factors that spread the "germs" of the disease, and it leads them to develop new rules for living that promote long-term economic self-sufficiency.

case example: **violence reduction** system point–target population: outreach to at-risk youth ■ contact: Joe Marshall, Director ■ PO Box 884463 ■ San Francisco, CA 94188 ■ 415-826-8664, 415-826-8673 fax ■ www.street-soldiers.org ■ drj@street-soldiers.org

Omega offers a weekly college preparation class for high school seniors who need help with schoolwork, filling out college applications, or submitting financial aid forms. Participants who show a long-term commitment to the program and who demonstrate leadership receive college scholarships.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

Omega is unique in its approach to teaching young people to break the cycle of violence through new rules for living. The task is accomplished through the academic program, which teaches adolescents to analyze the codes of the street and the messages they receive from the media, and through its radio presence.

PROJECT RIO-Y

PARENT ORGANIZATION

Texas Youth Commission
Steve Robertson, Executive Director
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Austin, TX 78765
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www.tyc.state.tx.us/programs/RIO.html
tyc@tyc.state.tx.us

OUTCOME DATA

In 2001, Project RIO-Y (Re-Integration of Offenders–Youth) served 1638 young offenders and referred 840 to the Texas Work Commission for employment assistance; 65 percent of that group gained employment. Within 31 days of release from a Texas Youth Commission facility, 76 percent of Project RIO-Y participants were engaged in a constructive activity, which the project defines as part-time employment, school enrollment, or technical training.

OVERVIEW

Project RIO-Y provides incarcerated young people with skills assessment, job training, personal development training, and postrelease job referral services. The project draws its participants from 16- to 21-year-olds who have been sentenced by the courts to the Texas Youth Commission for crimes that range from capital offenses to drug use to sexual

offenses. Participants enroll voluntarily, and they must do so at least six months before their release dates. A staff recommendation is required. In 1998, RIO-Y's population was mostly male. Approximately 40 percent were African-American, 40 percent were Latino, and 20 percent were white.

RIO-Y provides incarcerated youth with postrelease career-training opportunities and with the skills they need to find and keep employment as productive members of society. A rehabilitation program called Resocialization stresses correctional therapy, education, work, and discipline training to help young offenders develop a sense of personal responsibility for past and future actions. The process is divided into two main areas of programming: youth development and career exploration–workforce development.

Workforce development combines career exploration with job readiness training to help young offenders find jobs that provide living wages and that reflect and support their interests and talents. Students use several classroom tools for career exploration, including Magellan Explorer and Texas C.A.R.E.S software, which help them match interests with occupations and allow them to explore educational and vocational opportunities in their home communities.

RIO-Y participants receive pre-employment training in skills and values that help ensure workplace success. First,

case example **workforce development** system point–target population:
adjudication of incarcerated young offenders, ages 16–21 ■ contact: Burt Ellison, Project Director
■ Texas Workforce Commission ■ 101 East Fifteenth Street, Room 506T ■ Austin, TX 78778 ■
512-463-0834, 512-936-3090 fax ■ Bellison@twc.state.tx.us

participants reflect on their experiences and identify the job-related skills they already possess. Then they follow the basic steps to employment: how to write a résumé, fill out a job application, and interview successfully. When they are released, participants must pass skills tests to ensure competency before they are referred to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) or a similar work agency. TWC employment specialists help RIO–Y graduates find jobs and they administer federal and state tax credits for participating employers.

Project RIO–Y participants receive training in civic responsibility, social engagement, self-assessment, goal setting, and conflict management through a comprehensive set of integrated educational modules that reinforce the value of education, hard work, and social supports as pathways to success. Students learn in the classroom, through formal counseling relationships, in informal mentoring relationships, and in the continuous development of relationships with family and peers. Project RIO–Y imparts universal values within a multicultural approach but it tailors the curriculum to the individual needs and desires of each participant.

Project RIO–Y imposes significant responsibilities on staff members, youth participants, and the organization itself. The project's leaders know that youth service providers must strive for accountability from staff members and

participants, and they must measure outcomes in clear, consistent terms.

Project RIO–Y staff members attend mandatory annual training sessions that help them improve or develop a more intuitive sense of how to best provide social services. The subject matter includes ethics and confidentiality, issues surrounding AIDS and HIV, treatment options, and workforce and youth development.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

Project RIO–Y participants are expected to demonstrate competence in several areas before they graduate. They are pre- and post-tested about workforce knowledge, and they must demonstrate an appreciable increase in their information base. In addition, they must be able to accurately complete an employment application, develop a résumé, exhibit acceptable interview skills that are videotaped and critiqued, prepare and present 30-second commercials about themselves, and show they can respond effectively to employers' questions concerning their past offenses.

Project RIO–Y evaluates its program monthly for employment rates among participants and for ways of engaging them in constructive activities.

TAMPA MARINE INSTITUTE

PARENT ORGANIZATION

Associated Marine Institutes
5915 Benjamin Center Drive
Tampa, FL 33634
www.ami-fl.org
info@ami-fl.org

OUTCOME DATA

Sixty-six percent of Tampa Marine Institute (TMI) participants receive a favorable discharge. The 12 percent recidivism rate is the lowest among 20 programs run by Associated Marine Institutes, the parent organization.

OVERVIEW

The private, nonprofit TMI is a nonresidential program for offenders who enter a 9-month-long course of educational, vocational, and personal training. The student-to-staff ratio is 8:1. TMI usually has 45 Level 2 (minor offender) male and female participants between the ages of 14 and 18 who mostly have committed property offenses. Students are referred by the Department of Juvenile Justice or a local school system. TMI's maritime training in aquatics, seamanship, navigation, mapping, commercial fishing, and scuba is particularly useful in Tampa's commercial fishing and shrimping job market.

Participants meet daily with individual advisors to track progress and discuss issues. Students also interact informally

with adult role models, including the executive director and other staff in leadership positions, forming supportive relationships that extend beyond TMI itself. When someone misses school or has a tough day, staff members follow up to determine the difficulty and help find solutions. Staff members meet each month with families to engage them as much as possible in the growth and development of program participants.

All TMI participants receive core academic instruction, for which they earn high school credit. TMI encourages all students to finish high school or complete the GED. TMI students use the New Century software to analyze educational strengths and deficits and to arrange tutorial programs based on specific needs. In the process, they acquire basic computer skills they will be able to apply professionally.

The core curriculum also includes life and social skills. Students learn interpersonal communication, the nature of respect, anger management, and conflict resolution. They attend group sessions for substance abuse counseling or parent training, for example, based on individual need. A psychologist offers additional support. TMI also offers instruction in soft skills, and participants learn résumé writing, how to apply for a job, and what to do in an interview. Job placement assistance is provided.

case example: **nonresidential program** system point–target population:
adjudication of young offenders, aged 14–18 ■ contact: Michael Thornton, Executive Director ■
2015 Guy N. Verger Boulevard ■ Tampa, FL 33605 ■ 813-248-5091, 813-247-3998 fax ■
mt-tmi@mindspring.com

TMI uses a point card system to determine level placement and corresponding privileges. Personal conduct, attitude, and performance are measured, and points are traded for recreational outings and access to the maritime program.

New staff members complete an 80-hour orientation, shadow veteran staff members, and learn counseling skills. All staff members participate in monthly training programs, and each has an individual training plan. A staff meeting each morning reviews the past day's successes and failures and outlines the current day's objectives.

Staff members work together, with the students, and with family members to refine and improve individual treatment plans for each young adult. Each staff member is an advisor for a small group, acting as a resource person and a friend to group members. Staff members devote time, thought, and energy—individually and as a team—to interacting with TMI program participants in a way that challenges them to uphold high standards for their own behavior.

TMI participants receive 6 months of support and follow-up after they leave the program in conjunction with Project SAFE (Student And Family Enhancement). SAFE also offers postprogram support to Level 8–10 participants (serious offenders who have committed crimes such as murder or assault) in transition from residential facilities.

Young offenders meet with SAFE staff members before they leave their facilities, and SAFE picks them up from the facilities to begin working with them to stabilize their lives as soon as they return home. Participants are referred to service providers for health care, substance abuse counseling, and day care, for example. Staff members offer support 7 days a week for at least 3 months and, in conjunction with TMI, run an alternative school for students who are ineligible to return to local schools. SAFE staff members provide support, follow-up, and crisis management for at least a year—longer if necessary. And there is a continuing-education fund for young people who show promise and dedication.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

TMI has an extremely low recidivism rate. It provides high-quality educational and vocational opportunities for young people, although that in itself is not sufficient to guarantee such a positive outcome. TMI is notable for its emphasis on hiring high-quality staff members; for facilitating staff development, communication, and relationships; and for providing support, compassion, and respect to youthful offenders. The institute's foundations are the belief in the positive power of role modeling and in the conscious efforts of staff members to act as surrogate parents to young people who often have had limited experience with adults in any supportive, meaningful way.

T-CAP NORTH

PARENT ORGANIZATION

Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.
Thomas L. Jeffers, President
2007 North Third Street
Harrisburg, PA 17102
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www.yapinc.org
Tjeffers@yapinc.org

OUTCOME DATA

Seventy-five percent of T-CAP North participants receive a “positive discharge,” which allows them to move to less restrictive care, reside at home, or live independently.

OVERVIEW

Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (YAP), is a private, nonprofit organization that provides alternatives to incarceration. Founded in 1975, YAP now operates 90 programs in 9 states. T-CAP began in 1992 works to connect families with community-based services and supports—public schools, alternative education programs, scouting and other activities, and employment opportunities—appropriate to their specific circumstances.

T-CAP North serves 40–50 young people between the ages of 10 and 17 for about 10 weeks each. Between 75 and 80

percent of those who come into the program are involved in gangs. About 5 percent are female and most are African-American and Hispanic. The program refuses admission to no one.

When a new family or participant enters T-CAP, a service plan is established and adopted by the family, the probation department, and T-CAP’s director. The family is assigned a paid advocate from the community to coordinate the plan and establish connections between the family and community resources. Advocates are asked to have face-to-face contact with their families several times each week, including a weekly 1-hour session with just the parents or guardians. Advocates get to know families and young people well, and they help tailor individual support packages that might include parenting classes, counseling, job placement, or alternative schooling. In this context, life skills are taught to the child and to the family.

The program finds jobs for students who are 14 or older. Jobs must be of interest to participants, pay a minimum of \$50 per week, and have the potential to teach skills. This is called “supported work,” and it is seen as a critical diversion for students from gang activity. Wages are subsidized by YAP. Advocates also lead young people and their families in field trips, community service, and other enrichment activi-

case example: **alternative to incarceration** system point–target
population: adjudication of young offenders, aged 10–17 ■ contact: Belinda Hampton, Director
■ 2235 North Main Street ■ Fort Worth, TX 76106 ■ 817-625-4185, 817-625-4187 fax ■
Tcap44@yahoo.com

ties that increase participants’ confidence and their awareness of social and cultural issues. Advocates are responsible for transporting families or young people to court, jobs, or school and for helping them fill out paperwork, for example, for school enrollment or employment. T-CAP advocates are allocated funds to ensure that families are fed, clothed, and sheltered.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

T-CAP North follows a “wraparound” model in which the comprehensive needs of a young person—family relationships, social development, financial, legal, educational, emotional, and vocational—are met by a paid advocate hired from the community. Advocates often are college students or recent graduates recruited to work 15–30 hours each week, acting as role models, mentors, and liaisons between the student and the family, school, court system, and employers. They provide families with the individual attention they need to promote close relationships and foster meaningful, lasting change.

Because of the stress inherent in the one-on-one approach, the director and other professional staff closely supervise and support advocates. T-CAP North’s family-focused intervention eases the pressures and conflict families experience when young people become involved with the courts.

T-CAP uses individual and group counseling, conflict resolution, and life skills training to help the family become an asset and a strong, supportive foundation rather than a deficit. In the process, young people and their families develop the skills they need to find creative solutions to their own problems.

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ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. It was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of United Parcel Service, and his siblings, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and neighborhoods fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs. For more information, visit the Foundation's website, www.aecf.org.



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